

Men's Mental Health Awareness Month

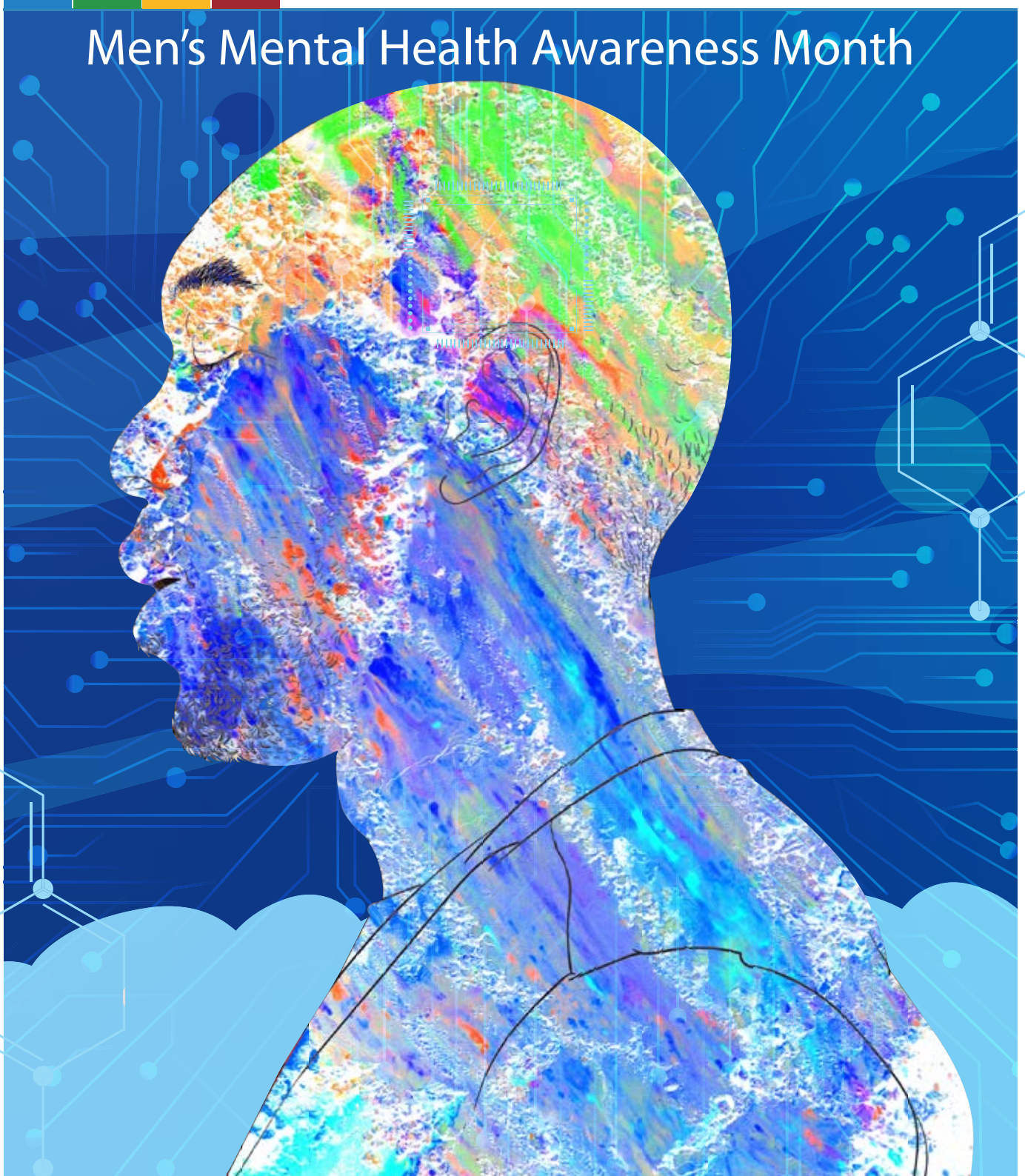
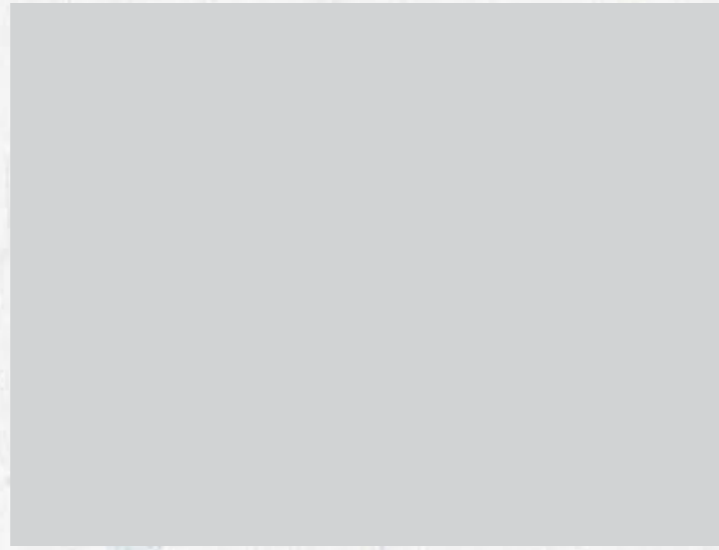


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Dear Alumni

We are delighted to present the latest edition of our newsletter, filled with exciting updates and opportunities to reconnect.

In this edition we introduce the newly appointed Principal of the Welkom Campus, who brings a wealth of experience and fresh perspectives. Dr Joe Molete's leadership promises to enhance our academic and cultural environment significantly.

We celebrate the 2024 Autumn Graduation Ceremonies. Focus is also placed on the various networking opportunities, such as the CUT Alumni Soup and Sherry Evening, the highly anticipated launch of the Cape Town CUT Alumni Chapter, and the astounding CRPM/PDTS/Mechanical Engineering CUT Alumni Interest Group Launch. These events were perfect for reconnecting with fellow alumni, old friends and building new connections.

June is Men's Mental Health Month, and in this edition we concentrate on raising awareness and understanding of the mental health challenges faced by men. This edition provides insights and resources to support our male alumni, and emphasises the importance of mental well-being for all.

We highlight an alumna who is a trailblazer in digital marketing, showcasing her contributions to the industry. Her story inspires and empowers us to pursue our passions in the digital age. Additionally, we feature dedicated health practitioners who make significant differences in the lives of their patients, demonstrating the profound impact of our alumni in the medical field.

Stay engaged with our alumni network and take advantage of these events to build and strengthen your professional and personal relationships. Kindly update your names and contact details on the CUT website <https://cut.devman.co.za/devman/web/findme/> or by sending an email to alumni@cut.ac.za.

Your involvement sustains the vibrant and supportive community that defines our alumni network.

Warmest regards

Jacqueline Pietersen
Deputy Director: Alumni Affairs

Introducing Dr Joe Molete as the CUT Welkom Campus Principal

As we reflect on two decades of excellence at the Central University of Technology (CUT), it is with great excitement that we introduce Dr Joe Molete as the new Welkom Campus Principal. Dr Molete's appointment comes at a significant juncture in our university's history as we celebrate 20 years of academic innovation and community impact.

Dr Molete's impressive career path and wealth of experience make him an ideal fit to lead our Welkom Campus into a new era of growth and development. With over twenty years of experience spanning research, technology commercialisation, academia, and executive leadership, Dr Molete brings a unique blend of expertise to his new role.

Throughout his career, Dr Molete has held esteemed positions at renowned institutions, including the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Biosciences and the Vaal University of Technology (VUT) Science and Technology Park. His tenure in these roles underscores his commitment to advancing innovation and fostering academic excellence. Dr Molete's academic journey is equally impressive, with notable achievements including a Ph.D. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from Penn State



Dr Joe Molete, Welkom Campus Principal

University and an MBA from the University of Cape Town. His dedication to lifelong learning and professional development reflects the values that lie at the heart of CUT's mission.

Beyond his academic and professional accomplishments, Dr Molete is well known for his entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to empowering future leaders. As the founder of the Dr Joe High-Performance Academy, he has inspired countless individuals through motivational speaking,

executive coaching, and leadership workshops.

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary, Dr Molete's appointment marks a significant milestone in our journey of growth and transformation. His visionary leadership and strategic acumen will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the Welkom Campus and strengthening our position as a leader in higher education.

Moreover, Dr Molete's global perspective, cultivated through his experiences in the United States and beyond, will enrich the diversity and vibrancy of our academic community. His passion for fostering innovation and embracing the opportunities presented by the Fourth Industrial Revolution align perfectly with our university's vision for the future.

As we embark on this exciting new chapter, we invite you to join us in welcoming Dr Joe Molete to the CUT community. Together, let us celebrate our past achievements and embrace the endless possibilities that lie ahead as we continue to inspire excellence, empower leaders, and transform lives.

CUT Alumni Chapter focuses on going beyond excellence to create impact.



The newly elected Working Committee of the CRPM/PDTS/Mechanical Engineering CUT Alumni Chapter. From left: John (JPC) Antunes, Sizwe Ntimane, Mpho Mashabela, Lekhooa Seleke, Interim President: Alumni Association, Katlego Makgeledisa and Miralda Kotze.

The Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT), recently launched the Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing (CRPM), Product Development Technology Station (PDTS), and Mechanical Engineering Alumni Interest Group. Acting Faculty Dean: Engineering, Built Environment, and Information Technology (FEBIT) Prof. Masinde Muthoni emphasised the invaluable role alumni play in the success of the university.

“Your professional achievements and dedication to your respective fields are not just a source of pride for us, but they are the very essence of CUT’s success. We cannot talk about our achievements without boasting about the achievements of our alumni, who are our esteemed brand ambassadors,” said Prof. Masinde.



Prof. Masinde Muthoni: Acting Dean: Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (FEBIT)

Guest speaker and Denel Group Chief Operating Officer, William Hlakoane reminisced of exactly 32 years ago when he arrived at CUT and how it helped shape his career in the industry. “In July 1992, I came here wanting to study electrical engineering. Unfortunately, civil and electrical engineering were already full, and there were only 15 students in mechanical engineering, so it was painful for us. However, I opted to do mechanical engineering,” said Hlakoane.

He explained that studying most of his subjects in Afrikaans, except for one, was a huge challenge he overcame to achieve his digital diploma in mechanical engineering. “I did my BTech, completed it, and later registered for the masters, which I did not complete. I then decided to pursue my MBA, which I completed at Milpark Business School. The efforts as the institution and as a centre of learning that help to develop our society and what is going on in the world should become agents for this university as an institution,” he added.



Dr Clifford Nxomani: Special Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor and Principal

Dr Clifford Nxomani, Special Advisor to the CUT Vice-Chancellor indicated that the efforts of these chapters should go beyond excellence to create an impact through connections. “This is to ensure that we can carry through into the outside world some of the values, knowledge and expertise that we have accumulated, but also looking to see how we invest back, plough back, and how do we pay it forward for future generations,” said Dr Nxomani. Alumni Association Interim President, Lekhooa Seleke, underscored the significance of these newly launched chapters that cater to specific interests within the university. “As alumni of CUT, we have a

significant responsibility to ensure that we have people who have a great impact in their respective fields. These alumni chapters not only preserve the history and traditions of the University but also play a vital role in connecting past students, supporting current students, promoting the university, raising funds, and fostering ongoing educational and professional development,” said Seleke. The newly elected Working Committee of the CRPM/PDTS/Mechanical Engineering CUT Alumni Chapter, a group of accomplished individuals, includes Miralda Kotze, Sizwe Ntimane, Mpho Mashabela, Katlego Makgeledisa and John (JPC) Antunes. Their diverse backgrounds and experiences promise to bring new perspectives and initiatives to the Alumni Association.



Prof. Deon de Beer, NRF SARChi Chair: Medical Product Development (CRPM) handing a gift to his former student, Mr William Hlakoane, Group Chief Operating Officer, Denel and CUT alumnus



Dr Terry Wohlers, who joined virtually from Washington DC, USA, reflects on his journey by reminiscing on when an honorary doctorate was conferred to him by CUT 20 years ago, while the country was celebrating 10 years of democracy. He emphasised that the launch is a crucial opportunity to unlock financial support for the university.



Celebrating the success of an inspirational alumna - Mags Shivanda

As soon as she walks into a room, you are met with an amazing, bubbly aura that instantly lifts your spirits. Mags Shivanda, a distinguished alumna of the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT), has been making remarkable strides in the world of digital marketing, embodying resilience, ambition, and a commitment to community upliftment.

Mags (Bulawana Margaret) Shivanda was born in Lesotho in 1983. Her journey towards success was not one paved with privilege, but rather with determination and perseverance.

Raised by her mother in the boisterous apartheid era, Mags vividly recalls the challenges they faced, the uncertainty of riots, and the simple yet profound moments of seeing her mother off to work as a security guard, often crossing paths on her way back from school.

University education seemed like a distant dream in those early days. The plan was straightforward: finish school and secure a job. However, when the recruitment officer from CUT visited her school, fate had other plans. A pivotal moment occurred introducing her to a world of possibilities, including financial

aid through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Encouraged by the potential for a brighter future, Mags dedicated herself to academic excellence, and applied to study marketing.

Her decision to pursue marketing was sparked by a moment of inspiration watching a woman on television, igniting Mags' belief that there was more to life than the confines of her circumstances.

Enrolling at the Free State Technikon (which later transitioned to CUT as a university), Mags glimpsed a promising future ahead. Under the mentorship of passionate lecturers,

Mags flourished. She fondly remembers one lecturer who went above and beyond, securing work opportunities to provide invaluable real-world experience. This hands-on approach laid the foundation for Mags' future success. Upon graduation, Mags embarked on a journey that would see her carve out a name for herself in the competitive world of digital marketing and media. A six-month internship at a prominent Johannesburg radio station quickly turned into a permanent role just three months later, exposing her to influential figures in the industry and fuelling her entrepreneurial spirit. Inspired by her experiences and driven by a desire to make a difference, Mags

founded DigitalShero, an award-winning digital marketing and media solutions company. With offices spanning across South Africa and into Nairobi, DigitalShero has become a beacon of innovation, providing businesses with cutting-edge strategies to thrive in the digital age.

Despite her impressive accomplishments, Mags remains grounded and committed to giving back to her community. She established the Bloem Girls Rock (BGR) Foundation, initially focusing on empowering young girls, but later expanding to include boys. Through initiatives such as computer literacy programmes

and annual campaigns to provide school shoes for underprivileged scholars, BGR reflects Mags' ethos of lifting others as she climbs. For Mags, challenges are not obstacles, but opportunities for growth and innovation. "If I am faced with a problem, it means that I am awarded the opportunity to come up with a solution. I do not quit, I always try to find a way to make things work," she emphasised. She approaches each hurdle with tenacity, refusing to accept defeat and constantly seeking solutions.

Her commitment to personal growth extends beyond the boardroom, as she trains tirelessly for a triathlon, embodying the belief that a healthy body nurtures a healthy mind. "When your body is healthy, your mind is healthy," she remarked, reflecting on her dedication to personal fitness as a pathway to mental well-being.

As we celebrate the success of Mags Shivanda, we are reminded of the transformative power of education, determination, and a devotion to community upliftment. Her journey from humble beginnings to a shining example of inspiration portrays the indomitable human spirit and the limitless potential that lies within each of us. Mags Shivanda is not just an alumna; she is a symbol of hope, resilience, and the unwavering pursuit of excellence.



Men's mental health awareness



Mr Thabo Monyatsi, Psychologist: CUT Wellness Centre

June is Men's Health Month, and in honour of this, we are shedding light on men's mental health. Our emotional, psychological and social well-being are crucial to our mental health, influencing our feelings, thoughts and behaviours. These aspects also determine how we respond to stress, interact with others, and make wise decisions.

We sat down with Mr Thabo Monyatsi from Wellness Centre at CUT, who provided valuable insights into the unique challenges men face. Many of these challenges stem from traditional masculinity traits, such as the pressure to be a provider, independent, and remain strong. Men often handle issues alone due to a fear of being judged. "Men will suffer in silence. For them, seeing a therapist feels like exposing their 'weaknesses' because they have been taught that a man should not cry," explained Monyatsi.

The societal pressures on men are unkind and relentless. It requires significant bravery to step back and seek help despite societal norms and potential judgment. As Monyatsi emphasised, "We are not just physical beings, we have a spirit and soul. If you are unwell mentally, it will show physically." Mental health issues can manifest in various physical symptoms, including hypertension, diabetes, altered sleeping and eating patterns, and prolonged sadness.

When grappling with mental health challenges, it is crucial to talk honestly with a friend, loved one, or doctor about what is happening in your mind and body. Once correctly diagnosed, there are many effective treatments and strategies to manage and prevent male depression. This is particularly urgent, given the alarming statistics from the South African Society of Psychiatrists, which reveal that South Africa has the tenth-highest suicide rate in the world, with 23.5 suicides per 100,000 people. Of the 13 774 suicides reported in South Africa, 10 861 were men.

Many men suffer in silence because society has stigmatised mental health issues amongst men, perpetuating the notion that men should not cry and must remain strong. Men suffering from depression are four times more likely to take their own lives than women, highlighting the vital importance of seeking help before feelings of despair escalate to suicidal thoughts.

Understanding the symptoms of depression and other mental health disorders is a crucial step in addressing these issues. Men may experience a range of mental health disorders, including anxiety disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), eating disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance use disorders, and co-occurring mental health conditions. Recognising these symptoms early and seeking appropriate help can prevent the progression of these disorders and improve overall well-being.

Addressing men's mental health requires a collective effort to break down societal stigmas and encourage open conversations about mental well-being. Raising awareness and providing support can help men lead healthier and more fulfilling lives.

Several helplines are available for those in need of support:

- The Department of Social Development Substance Abuse Helpline can be reached at 0800 12 13 14 or via SMS to 32312
- The South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) offers assistance at 011 234 4837
- The Suicide Crisis Helpline is available at 080 056 7567
- Click here to watch the video: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/WqFqoDjJMZ45CAHm/>



Central University of Technology, Free State 2024 Autumn Graduation Ceremonies

The Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) recently marked a significant milestone with its 2024 Autumn Graduation Ceremonies, held from 4 to 11 April 2024. Spread across the sprawling campuses of Welkom and Bloemfontein, this grand celebration of academic achievement saw a total number of 4 043 qualifications conferred, illuminating the university's path with the brilliance of knowledge and accomplishment.

As the ceremonies unfolded, echoing with the jubilant cheers of graduates and the proud applause of families and friends, Prof. David Ngidi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC): Teaching and Learning took to the stage to address the gathering. With pride in his eyes, he remarked, "This graduation is extra special, because we are celebrating CUT's 20th anniversary.

With more graduates compared to last year, this is not just a ceremony, it is a testament to our unwavering commitment to excellence and progress on our journey towards Vision 2030."

Amongst the distinguished guests gracing the occasion, were executives from the Matjhabeng Local Municipality, who joined the festivities at the Welkom Campus. However, it was the presence of the newly appointed Chancellor, Dr Vincent Maphai, that added a touch of grandeur to the proceedings. Maphai reminisced about his own graduation, remarking, "It was such an honour for me to be part of this celebration. Back in 1975, the ceremony was mainly comprised of men. Today, witnessing the transformation, seeing women take charge and graduate in numbers, is truly marvellous."

In the realm of academic innovation, CUT unveiled a groundbreaking initiative in 2023, which was the Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education. Designed to elevate the standards of university lecturers and enrich the quality of teaching and learning, the inaugural cohort of this programme graduated on 9 April 2024, embodying the spirit of progress and excellence that defines CUT.

Amidst the sea of mortarboards and academic regalia, one figure stood out - Dr Michael Jordaan - a titan of the business world, who was bestowed an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy in Management. With a career spanning continents and industries, Jordaan's contributions to the business landscape are nothing short of legendary.

As he humbly accepted the honour, he shared his vision for the future, saying, "True leadership lies in empowering others to succeed. Let us strive not only for personal success, but for the collective advancement of society."

The festivities culminated in the grand Doctorandi Dinner, where doctoral candidates were celebrated alongside their loved ones for their remarkable achievements. Amongst them, voices from afar resonated, as candidates from Ghana University shared their reflections on their transformative journey at CUT. Dr Moses Ahiabu, brimming with gratitude, exclaimed, "I never thought that coming to South Africa would be so life changing. CUT has been more than a university, it has been a beacon of opportunity and growth. I am incredibly grateful for the support."



Twin sisters, Rubynah and Subynah Thamae, received their BEd degrees in Language Education



Twin brothers, Kevin and Keith Goliath, received the diplomas in Public Management

In his closing remarks, Prof. Alfred Ngowi, DVC: Research, Innovation and Engagement, congratulated all the candidates, and painted a vivid picture of CUT's journey of evolution and excellence.

"As we stand on the cusp of a new era, let us not forget the strides we've taken and the heights we've yet to reach. With unwavering dedication and a spirit of innovation, we will continue to push the boundaries of knowledge and shape the future of our nation and beyond."

The 2024 Autumn graduations at CUT show the institution's rich legacy of academic excellence, innovation and inclusivity. As the torchbearers of knowledge and agents of change, the graduates of CUT embark on their next chapter, armed with the wisdom of the past and the promise of the future, to make their mark in the world and carry forward the legacy of excellence that defines their alma mater.



Dr Michael Jordaan with the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof. Pamela Dube



Dr Moses Ahiabu, Doctor of Engineering: Civil Engineering



Dr Brian Ngobeni (PhD: Biomedical Technology) and Dr Juanita Jonker (DPhil: Environmental Health)

Nomabhongo Masana – Excellence in Information Technology education



In academia, there are individuals whose dedication and passion leave an indelible mark on their students and peers alike. Nomabhongo Masana, a distinguished alumna of the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT), stands as a shining example of such excellence. Driven by an initial aspiration towards civil engineering, Nomabhongo's journey took an unexpected, yet transformative, turn towards information technology (IT). Guided by a steadfast belief in divine providence, she embraced this new path wholeheartedly, trusting that it was leading her exactly where she needed to be.

She faced some challenges, particularly financial constraints. "I applied to study at CUT, with funding for the first year only," she says. "However, through sheer determination and academic competence, I earned the financial support of the Vice-Chancellor's Award, where my performance was recognised with *cum laude* honours for my National Diploma, BTech, and Master's in Information Technology."

Transitioning seamlessly from student to educator, Nomabhongo now serves as a lecturer in the Department of IT at CUT. Her role extends beyond the confines of traditional teaching, encompassing research, community engagement, and, most importantly, the nurturing of young minds. "I love my job. I could have chosen a different career path, but I love being an educator. I find fulfilment in motivating my students and seeing them grow and advance in their careers," she explains. Nomabhongo was part of the first student cohort in the Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education.

Nomabhongo spearheaded the Cisco Learn-A-Thon Project, leading her team to an impressive 5th place in the Instructor Competition, out of 313 participating classes globally. Despite it being their first entry, Nomabhongo's pride in their achievement is palpable, and she harbours hopes of attracting more participants in the future to bolster their chances of success. In her pedagogical approach, Nomabhongo emphasises the importance of equipping students not only with knowledge, but also with the skills and resilience needed for success in the professional arena. Her dedication to continuous improvement is reflected in her embrace of innovative teaching strategies and educational technologies, ensuring that her students receive a relevant and enriching learning experience.

With aspirations of pursuing a doctorate and a steadfast commitment to balancing her professional and personal life, Nomabhongo exemplifies resilience, humility, and unwavering faith. Her advice to others echoes her own journey – to trust in God, work diligently, and persevere in the face of adversity. When not immersed in academia, Nomabhongo finds solace and joy in spending time with her family and indulging her passion for baking cakes. As Nomabhongo continues to lead the way for upcoming academic generations, her legacy shines brightly and inspires others, demonstrating the transformational power of education and unshakable faith.

Lintle Mokitimi - Making a difference in renal care



Despite the uncertainty, she held a steadfast conviction that she wanted to pursue a career in the healthcare sector. Her time at CUT solidified this resolve as she immersed herself in the study of Clinical Technology with a specialisation in Nephrology.

What drew Lintle to this field was not just the technical aspect but the opportunity for intimate, one-on-one interactions with patients. This desire for personal connection led her to the dialysis unit, where she tended to individuals suffering from renal failure. In this emotionally taxing environment, Lintle's empathy shines through, as she not only administers treatment but also offers a listening ear and a comforting presence to her patients.

Reflecting on her journey, Lintle fondly recalls her time at Mannheim Ladies Residence during her first year at CUT. There, she found a sense of community and camaraderie, fostering relationships that would shape her university experience. This sense of belonging and support served as a foundation for her academic and professional pursuits.

One of Lintle's most significant accomplishments is witnessing her patients undergo kidney transplants. In a healthcare system where resources are often stretched thin, seeing her patients regain their health and independence brings her immense joy and fulfilment. Through her dedication and advocacy, she has facilitated life-changing opportunities for those in her care, allowing them to reclaim their lives beyond the confines of the dialysis unit.

However, Lintle acknowledges the challenges inherent in her profession, particularly in the public sector. As an advocate for better healthcare access and quality, she recognises the need for systemic improvements to alleviate the burden on public health services. Despite these obstacles, her unwavering commitment to her patients and her profession drives her to push for positive change, instilling a sense of hope for a better healthcare system.

In the fast-paced realm of healthcare, where each second is crucial, and every interaction holds weight, there are individuals like Lintle Mokitimi, a graduate of the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) in Bloemfontein, who are quietly but profoundly impacting the lives of others. Born in Maseru, Lesotho, Lintle's path to becoming a clinical technologist, specialising in nephrology, is a testament to her compassion and deep-rooted commitment to serving others.

Lintle's path to her current role at a private dialysis unit in Ladybrand was not linear. After completing her matric at Yeshua College, she took a deliberate gap year to contemplate her career aspirations.

In 2022, Lintle began a new challenge by enrolling in CUT's Advanced Diploma in Health Management. Balancing work and school proved to be her most daunting project yet, but with the support of her colleagues and patients, she navigated the complexities with determination and resilience.

Lintle offers sage advice to aspiring renal technologists. "Never lose sight of the passion that ignited your journey. In the face of adversity and self-doubt, let compassion and empathy guide your actions, knowing that every effort to serve others is a step toward a brighter, healthier future."

Lintle's story shows the profound impact that individuals can have when they approach their work with dedication, empathy, and a commitment to making a difference in the lives of others. Through her tireless efforts, she exemplifies the spirit of service and compassion that defines the best healthcare professionals.



The CUT Alumni Soup and Sherry Evening creates a night of warmth and connection



CUT Alumni attending the Soup and Sherry Evening

On the crisp evening of 6 June 2024, the esteemed Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) Hotel School was aglow with a warm, inviting ambiance as the Alumni Affairs Office hosted a Soup and Sherry Evening for CUT graduates.

This delightful gathering was more than just an opportunity to indulge in delicious cuisine; it was a heartfelt celebration of CUT's 20th anniversary, aimed at fostering connections, reminiscing about shared experiences, and fortifying the bonds that tie alumni to their alma mater. Different alumni met at the Hotel School, each bringing with them stories of their journey since leaving the university.

The atmosphere buzzed with animated conversations, laughter, and the clinking of glasses filled with sherry – a nod to the evening's unique

theme. The event was a melting pot of diverse backgrounds, professions and experiences, reflecting the CUT alumni network. The purpose of this evening extended beyond socialising and savouring a hearty meal. It served as a vital platform to underscore the significance of the alumni participation as members of the CUT Alumni Association.

Members of the Alumni Association Executive Committee were present, mingling with attendees and sharing insights about the pivotal work they do to uphold the university's legacy and support current students. Guest speaker, Deputy Director: Language Services, and CUT alumnus, Dr Lehlohonolo Motake, uttered an inspirational speech. "We are forever connected by the indelible mark CUT has left on us. Let us leverage this powerful bond, embrace strong

leadership, and work together to elevate the CUT brand to even greater heights. Let us build a stable and focused alumni network, a network that becomes a driving force for positive change. The world we face today is vastly different from the one we entered CUT 20 years ago.

We are faced with economic uncertainties, technological disruptions, and a global landscape that seems to shift with every passing day. But here is the thing: we are CUT graduates! We are equipped with the knowledge, the adaptability, and the unwavering determination to not only navigate these challenges, but to thrive in them," he said.

One of the evening's highlights was a stirring address by the Interim President of the Alumni Association, Lekhooa Seleke.

“We are the brand ambassadors of our alma mater,” he proclaimed, his voice resonating with pride and conviction. “We should always touch base and stay informed about what is happening at CUT. Our connection to the university doesn’t end at graduation; it evolves and strengthens as we grow in our personal and professional lives.”

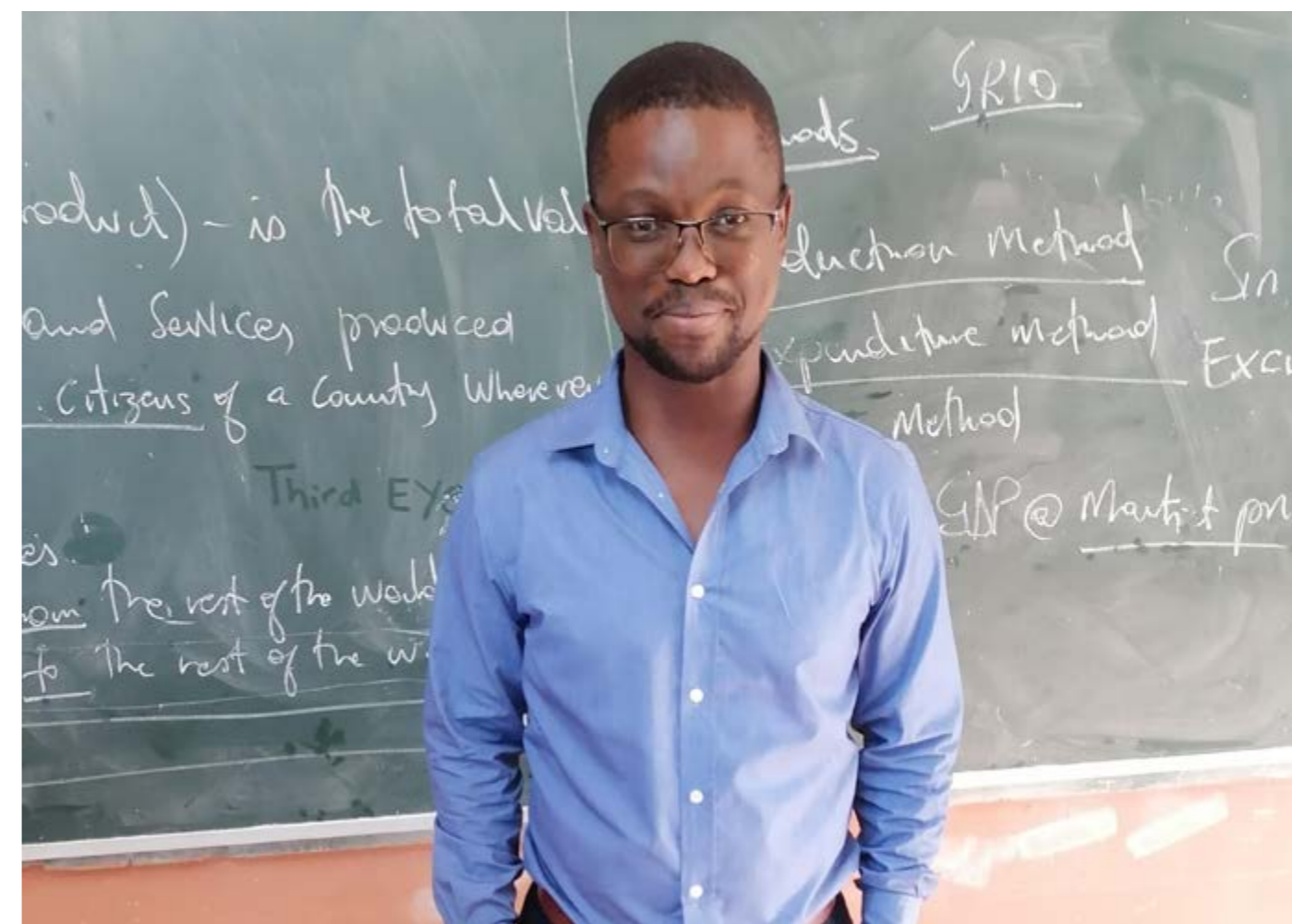
His words struck a chord with many, especially when he touched upon the challenges faced by alumni. “One of our ongoing challenges is the issuance of certificates,” he explained, emphasising the hurdles and financial constraints that some graduates encounter. “We come from different backgrounds, and not everyone can always afford tuition fees. This is where the power of our community comes into play.”

With an earnest plea, he urged his fellow alumni to contribute to the Alumni Bursary Fund. “I urge you to give towards this fund to help a student in need. Every contribution, no matter how small, can make a significant difference in someone’s life. It’s our chance to give back and ensure that the doors of education remain open for all.”

The evening progressed with a delectable array of soups that warmed the soul, and different types of sherry that delighted the palate. Conversations flowed seamlessly, with alumni sharing fond memories of their time at CUT, exchanging professional insights, and discussing ways to contribute to the university’s future. Adding a touch of excitement to the evening was a prize draw, eagerly anticipated by all attendees.

The room buzzed with eagerness as the names were called out, and five lucky alumni walked away with wonderful prizes, further adding to the joyous spirit of the event.

As the event drew to a close, the air was filled with a renewed sense of purpose and unity. The CUT Alumni Soup and Sherry Evening had not only brought together a diverse group of individuals, but had also ignited a collective spirit of giving and support. Alumni departed with their hearts full, carrying with them the reminder that their connection to CUT is a lifelong bond, one that they are proud to uphold and nurture.



Monde Gift Mochadibane – shaping futures and communities

Monde Mochadibane is a dedicated educator and entrepreneur whose unwavering commitment to his students and community embodies the spirit of making a difference. Born and raised in Welkom, Monde navigated the corridors of education with resilience and purpose.

He reminisces about his upbringing as the only boy amongst six siblings. Monde’s educational journey began at Embonisweni Primary School, where the seeds of his future were sown. He then continued his education at Teto High School, laying the groundwork for his aspirations.

When Monde entered further studies, his career path took a surprising turn. Fate intervened, and steered him towards a bachelor’s degree in education, despite his initial preference for a bachelor’s degree in financial mathematics. Driven by the prospect of a bursary, Monde seized this opportunity, thanks to a combination of chance and circumstance. The Funza Lushaka bursary

enabled Monde to set a new course for his family and himself.

Monde’s tenure at the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) was not only defined by academic pursuits, but also by advocacy and activism. He was a shining example of leadership during the #Fees-Must-Fall movement, acting as the Deputy Secretary of the Welkom Campus Fees-Must-Fall Committee. His engagement in student action demonstrated his dedication to fair education and social justice.

Monde worked as an English teacher at Dangwana S.S.S. after obtaining his degree. His focus on grade 12 students epitomises his dedication to guiding the next generation towards success. Beyond the confines of the classroom, Monde’s role extended to the district English Committee, where he contributed to shaping educational assessments and standards.



Dr Lehlohonolo Motake, Deputy Director: Language Services



Hun Seunhyun, CUT alumnus with Lekhooa Seleke, Interim President: CUT Alumni Association

However, the path of an educator is not without its challenges. Monde grapples with the demands of administering extra classes and navigating disciplinary issues. Yet, his unwavering resolve to support his students shines through.

“I support my learners by giving them individual attention and special assessments to bridge the learning gap. I also take two lunch boxes to school for those who do not have anything to eat. We sometimes eat together. The best thing about my job is seeing learners succeed in life because of the knowledge that is imparted to them by teachers and having them turn into the best citizens and professionals. This shows that as a teacher I have achieved my goal,” he says.

Monde’s impact as an educator resonates through his remarkable achievements. From attaining a 100% pass rate in English and Economics, to nurturing a culture of academic excellence, his legacy is etched in the success stories of his students. In spite of that, Monde reflects on the obstacles he faces, from the distance separating him from his family to the setbacks encountered in his entrepreneurial endeavours.

As the Director of Luvanolwethu (Pty) Ltd, Monde aspires to create opportunities for economic empowerment and community development. Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, his resilience remains unyielding, fuelled by a vision of revitalising his business and making a lasting impact in his community.

Monde desires to lead as a school principal, and to collaborate with private and non-profit sectors for educational upliftment. His ambition knows no bounds. As he eagerly awaits the outcome of his applications, Monde remains steadfast in his pursuit of excellence and service.



Monde Mochadibane with his learners

Cape Town CUT Alumni Chapter launched



Dr Clifford Nxumani: Special Advisor to the CUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal

On 8 June 2024, the Cape Town CUT Alumni Chapter was launched, marking a significant milestone in fostering stronger connections between the alumni in Cape Town and their alma mater. The event, held in the heart of Cape Town, saw a warm gathering of former students, eager to reconnect and contribute to their university’s legacy. Ms Jacqueline Pietersen, Deputy Director: Alumni Affairs, opened the event with an inspiring welcome address. Her heartfelt gratitude and excitement were palpable as she expressed appreciation for the alumni attendance. “Your presence signifies the enduring bond you share with your alma mater,” she said.

The session featured an engaging presentation by Ms Jubee Mawoyo, Assistant Registrar: Academic Structure and Student Enrolment Services. She captivated the audience with a detailed lesson on the new website functionalities, application processes, and common challenges students face today. Her step-by-step guide on how to apply and choose qualifications was particularly well received, highlighting her dedication to making academic processes more accessible and user friendly. A historical overview was presented by Prof. Solomon Makola, Interim Director: Institutional Renewal and Transformation, who eloquently traced CUT’s journey from the former Technikon Free State and Vista University to its current status as a university of technology celebrating its 20th anniversary.

“Alumni are the only permanent stakeholders of the university,” he emphasised. “When the university thrives, so do its alumni.” Prof. Makola highlighted key transformation aspects such as cultural change, business process innovation, spatial infrastructural and environmental advancements, scholarship, and research and innovation enterprise. He also proudly announced the increased representation of female Council members, underscoring the institution’s commitment to diversity and inclusion. Dr Clifford Nxumani, Special Advisor to the CUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, enriched the discussion with insights into the symbiotic relationship between alumni and the university.

“The university is our mother ship, where we gain our academic heritage and life skills,” he remarked. He stressed the importance of alumni maintaining a reciprocal relationship with the university. “Invest in giving back,” he urged. “Your industry experience is invaluable. You can guide the new generation, who may not yet know what to expect in the professional world. Remember, universities need resources to thrive. It’s not about us asking for donations, but recognising that as alumni, you possess social capital, built during your time here and expanded through your professional networks.” The event concluded with the election of the chapter leadership.

Kim van Bosch was elected as the new Cape Town Alumni Chapter Coordinator, and her acceptance speech was both humble and heartfelt. “I am deeply honoured and privileged to serve,” she expressed. “My passion lies in teaching, training and improving our students. You are my community and my family, and I look forward to leading alongside those elected today.”

The launch of the Cape Town Alumni Chapter shows the enduring spirit of the university community. It promises to be a cornerstone for fostering lasting relationships, mutual growth, and shared success. The enthusiasm and commitment displayed by all attendees set a promising tone for the future endeavours of the chapter.



Prof. Solomon Makola, Interim Director: Institutional Renewal and Transformation Unit

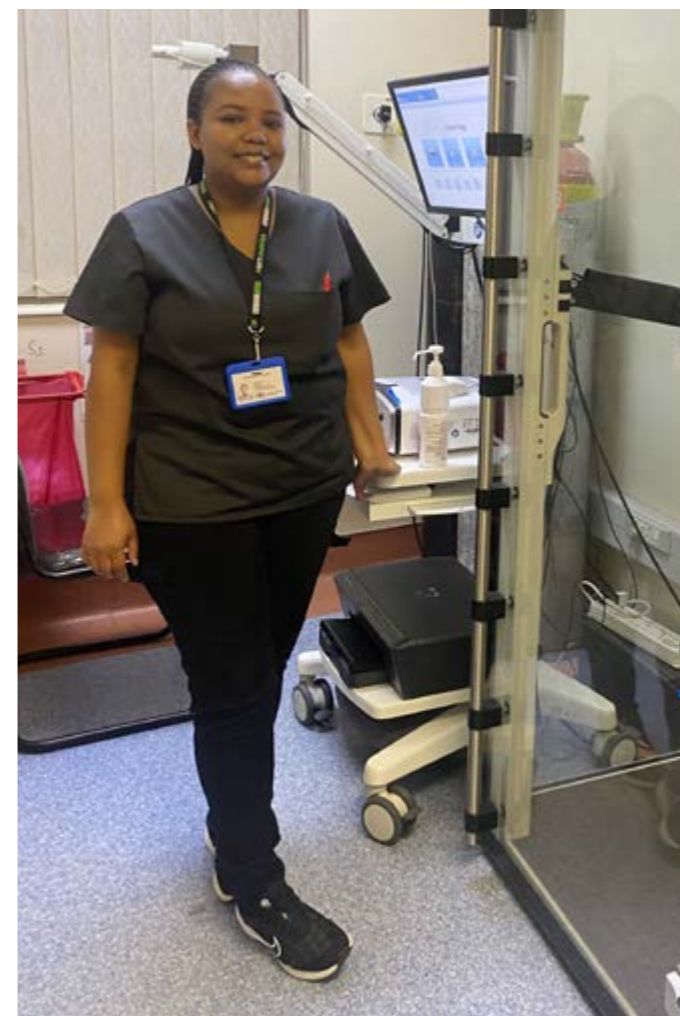


Mrs Kim van Bosch with Ms Makgotso Kgosana of the CUT Alumni Affairs Office



The newly elected Cape Town CUT Alumni Chapter Leadership with members of the CUT delegation

From Colesberg to cutting-edge care - Amber Visagie



Amoré Amber Visagie’s story is one of resilience, determination, and a commitment to making a difference. Hailing from the small town of Colesberg in the heart of the Karoo, Amoré’s journey to success has been marked by challenges overcome and barriers shattered. Growing up in a single-parent household with limited means, Amoré’s childhood was marked by financial struggle.

Yet, even in the face of adversity, she demonstrated a remarkable work ethic, taking on jobs from a young age to support her family. “I relied on the school feeding scheme and a stationery bursary that I would occasionally buy groceries at home with. I also worked at restaurants during school holidays from when I was 15 years old, because my mother was unemployed,” she reflects. These early experiences instilled in her a deep sense of perseverance and a drive to succeed against all odds.

Upon enrolling at the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT), uncertainty loomed large. She embarked on her studies in Clinical Technology with nothing but faith to guide her. Her motivation? A desire to challenge the stigma surrounding government hospitals, and to provide patients with the excellent care they deserve. Amoré’s time at CUT was defined by her commitment to her studies, often spending late nights in the library with friends, striving for academic excellence.

Today, as a Grade 1 Lung Function Technologist at the Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital, Amoré plays a vital role in the healthcare system. Performing lung function tests and assisting pulmonologists, she ensures that patients receive the highest standard of care, particularly those battling lung diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), interstitial lung disease (ILD), systemic lupus erythematosus, and asthma.

Amoré’s impact extends beyond the technical aspects of her job. Building trust with patients is at the core of her approach, showing them respect, empathy, and unshakable support. For her, the greatest reward lies in knowing that she has made a difference in someone’s life, offering them a level of care that surpasses even private healthcare standards. “I performed a lung function on a patient that everyone before me could not get right. This enabled the patient to get a date for a long-awaited lobectomy of which their life depended on. The best thing about my job is going home every day knowing I helped someone, I made them smile, and offered them the best service that tops private healthcare,” she said.

Amoré’s journey had its challenges. From mastering complex procedures in the operating theatre to navigating the intricacies of patient care, she has faced each obstacle head-on, never faltering in her pursuit of excellence. Looking to the future, Amoré’s aspirations remain as ambitious as ever.

Whether it is rising to the ranks of chief clinical technologist, pursuing a leadership role as an assistant director, or furthering her education with a master's degree, she refuses to rest on her laurels. Reflecting on her journey, Amoré recognises the value of her education and the importance of self-compassion. Despite the hardships she has endured, she remains grounded, finding joy in the simple pleasures of life, whether it is losing herself in a good book or savouring a meal at her favourite restaurant.

Amoré Amber Visagie's story is that of the power of perseverance, the impact of compassionate care, and the transformative potential of education. From Colesberg to the cutting edge of healthcare, she continues to be an inspiration with her devotedness to making the world a better place, one patient at a time.



Amore Visagie assisting a patient

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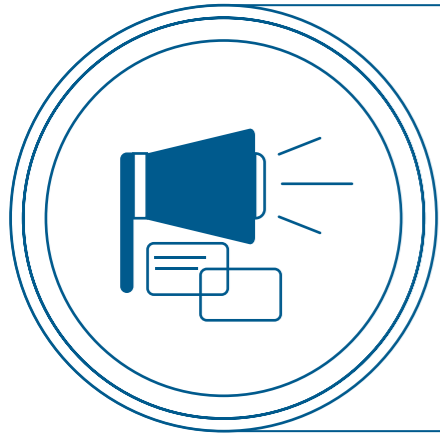
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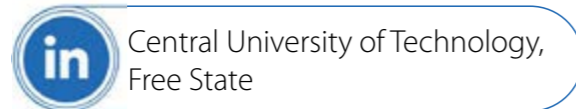
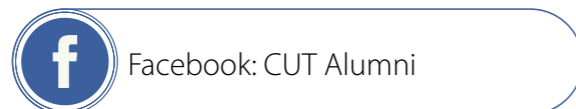
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Invest in our youth. The CUT Alumni Bursary Fund supports deserving disadvantaged students - a small contribution makes a big difference.
Click here <https://www.cut.ac.za/Donate/alumni-bursary-fund> to see how you can help.



SHARING IS CARING

Share your own (or fellow alumni's) achievements/journey to success with us.
Click here: jhpietersen@cut.ac.za



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