

From Campus to the City: *Thando Massequé's Rise to Miss Egoli*

By Lindokuhle Nkosi

Thandolwethu Massequé, a third-year Financial Planning student at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), has once again proven that dreams rooted in campus soil can grow to touch the skyline. After previously holding the Miss TUT Ga-Rankuwa crown, she has now claimed the title of Miss Egoli, an achievement she describes as both “unbelievable and amazing.”

The young queen from Mpumalanga has always had pageantry in her blood, inspired by her mother who once walked the runway in her own youth. That inspiration ignited a passion from a young age, leading Thando to take part in primary school pageants and eventually find herself imagining the Miss South Africa stage.

Her journey through Miss TUT wasn't just a stepping stone, it was a training ground. “Miss TUT really prepared me,” she reflects. With guidance from her choreographer Gerald, who instilled the importance of presence over pressure, Thando learned to own the stage not for the crown, but for the moment.



Thandolwethu Massequé Financial Planning 3rd year



Miss Egoli winner Thandolwethu

Behind the glitz of Miss Egoli lies a demanding preparation process. From daily routines in heels to visualising her success, she leaned on prayer, positive self-talk, and her passions like gym, travel, content creation, and Journaling, to stay grounded. Her biggest challenge was emotional vulnerability, a personal hurdle she overcame through faith and self-awareness. “I cry first before I gain courage,” she admits, “but God helped me find strength.”

What sets Miss Egoli apart is its entrepreneurial requirement. Thando rose to the occasion by starting her own earrings business, balancing it with her studies and a weekend job to raise capital. That venture is now a growing brand she hopes will blossom into something bigger.

Balancing academics and pageantry proved to be one of her greatest tests. “I almost quit both,” said Thandolwethu. But with time management and focus, she found her rhythm, studying during the week and dedicating weekends to pageant work.

One of the most defining moments of her journey came with personal grief. Thando lost her grandfather the day before the Miss Egoli competition. “Walking that stage with boldness, while carrying that pain, showed me how strong I really am,” said the 2025 Miss Egoli winner.

Her reign is not just about wearing a crown, it's about making an impact. Thando has already established the TJM Foundation, focusing on outreach programs for young children. She's also planning to host “Girls Talk” sessions at TUT and local schools, aimed at empowering young women who, like her, may have once struggled to find their voice.

“Depression, silence, and self-doubt are battles I've fought. I don't want any girl to go through that alone,” she said. Through storytelling and open conversations, she hopes to change lives, one visit at a time.

Thando's journey is a testimony to perseverance, faith, and staying true to oneself. She urges TUT students to dream boldly. “Never limit yourself. It doesn't matter where you come from. Your weakness can be your greatest strength,” said Thandolwethu.

Looking ahead, Thando aims to grow in every area, her personal life, her earrings brand, and her foundation. She dreams of collaborating with fashion labels and continuing her work as an advocate for unheard voices. 🌟

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Faculty of Science Hosts Health Roadshow to Raise Obesity Awareness

By Azola Nontsozi

The Faculty of Science at Tshwane University of Technology hosted a Health Roadshow on 19 March 2025, focusing on raising awareness about obesity. The event aimed to educate students, staff, and the broader university community about the causes, risks, and prevention of obesity.

The initiative included representatives from the Adelaide Tambo School of Nursing Science, the Department of Sport, Rehabilitation and Dental Science, and the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences. With a strong focus on promoting wellness, the event featured fitness demonstrations, health assessments, and expert talks.

"I was invited to this event for group fitness activities, my duty was to teach students and staff about the importance of keeping fit," said Mpho Bethuel, a fitness instructor.

Students and staff were given access to BMI assessments, blood pressure checks, and dietary guidance. Experts emphasized the health risks of fast food and encouraged students to cook nutritious meals as a way to avoid obesity-related health complications.

"We are raising awareness of obesity and its implications," said Dr Masubelele Nomusa. "The 4th of March commemorates World Obesity Day, and that's where this initiative comes from. We aim to encourage healthier lifestyle adoptions among students and the TUT community."

The event also included interactive Q&A sessions, competitions, and even body massages, which excited many students and promoted a culture of self-care. The lively atmosphere helped students learn about obesity in an engaging and practical way.

"Obesity is a contributing factor for many diseases like hypertension and diabetes," said Dr Brinke Ntjana, a Biokinetics Lecturer and Event Coordinator. "We also want to encourage the availability of healthy food in our campus cafeterias to support students in living a healthy lifestyle."

The Health Roadshow was a success, drawing strong student participation and highlighting the importance of physical activity, balanced nutrition, and wellness on campus. 🌱

"Obesity is a contributing factor for many diseases like hypertension and diabetes. We also want to encourage the availability of healthy food in our campus cafeterias to support students in living a healthy lifestyle."

Dr Brinke Ntjana
Biokinetics Lecturer and Event Coordinator



■ Doctor Brinke Ntjana – Course coordinator and biokinetics lecturer



■ Doctor Masubelele Nomusa – Lecturer and nurse



■ Mpho Tselana Fitness instructor

Promotion for Thapelo TP Motloutse



■ Thapelo Motloutse

By Lindokuhle Nkosi

Congratulations are in order for Tshwane University of Technology's (TUT Hockey) very own Thapelo Motloutse. TP has been promoted to the Centre Panel Technical Official by the Federation of International Hockey (FIH). With his journey in hockey which started in 2013, he is a living testament that with hard work and determination anything is possible.

"I felt excited when I received the news, it's the first time that you find a black male being promoted in South Africa. This also brings more enthusiasm and motivation to the officials who are involved in hockey." Said Thapelo. Starting as a volunteer, to making a name for himself on the international level, Thapelo now has a new role which he believes will be his way to give a path to people who want to play hockey or those who want to be in the officiating side like him.

Having grown up in Hammanskraal, Thapelo faced several challenges, including a lack of access to hockey. To reach the level he's at today, he had to sharpen many aspects of his life, including improving his language skills and adjusting his lifestyle.

"For South African hockey this means a lot as I am the only black person who is part of all the categories in the international setup in SA and not only just TUT. This also puts South African Hockey in the right position as it shows the transformation within the sport," said Motloutse.

As much as he has achieved many things within the world of hockey, TP still has future aspirations, especially at the international level. "I'd like to go to the Junior World Cup, I believe that would be a good setting for me," he said. Thapelo also added how he believes going to the World Cup will open up even more doors for him, and also give him a platform to go even higher.

A strong support system has been key to his success. "My partner, Lilian Mashele, has been my rock. She's supported me through thick and thin, whether I'm coaching, officiating, or receiving good or bad news, she's always there," said Thapelo.

Thapelo encouraged TUT students interested in hockey to focus on passion rather than fame or money. "This sport is about love for the game and elevating it to greater heights," he said.

Thapelo Motloutse's journey is an inspiring reminder that with passion and perseverance, breaking barriers and achieving greatness is possible. 🏑

SDS puts students mental health first

By Nornbuzo Sithole

Mental health has become an increasingly important topic in recent years, gaining significant attention across various sectors. The growing awareness highlights its profound impact on individuals, reinforcing the need for it to be a top priority especially in academics. We live in fast-paced and demanding world, where stress, pressure and personal challenges can take toll on one's mental being. This reality should not be ignored.

Mental health affects many aspects of our lives, from relationships and academic performances to physical health. Yet despite the significance, mental health issues are often overlooked or minimized, sometimes with devastating consequences. Many students in tertiary institutions struggle with anxiety, depression, and burnout as they juggle both schoolwork and their personal lives. Without proper support, these struggles can spiral negatively impacting both their academics and overall well-being.

While academic achievements are important, mental health should never be sidelined. Universities therefore have the responsibility to foster a supportive and inclusive environment where students feel safe to seek help if they need one. Providing access to mental health resources, creating open conversations around psychological well-being, and integrating wellness initiatives into the curriculum are essential steps towards ensuring that students thrive, not only in academics but holistically too.

Recognizing this need, Tshwane University of Technology established the Student Development and support (SDS) unit dedicated to promoting student success and positive mental health. SDS offers free counseling and therapy services across all TUT campuses and hosts online mental health seminars to help students with coping mechanisms. The university acknowledges that students' emotional well-being is important and should not be neglected.

"Adjusting to university life can be anxiety provoking as one can be far from their family members, friends and familiar spaces. The transition can be emotionally, spiritually and mentally draining as they will be adjusting to a new environment. Therefore SDS wants to let them know that they are not alone, SDS is available to offer counselling services and they are welcome to consult with our professional



Manoko Magoroga - SDS Practitioner & Gender desk counsellor

psychologists and registered counselors and social workers who will help them deal with issues of mental health. SDS also offers study counseling for students who struggle with concentration and coping with hectic schedules." said Manoko Magoroga - SDS Practitioner & Gender desk counsellor

SDS encourages all students especially first years, to take advantage of these services. Counselling services are available free and confidential at offices across all TUT campuses. Interested students can email counselling@tut.ac.za or call the 24-hour toll-free 0800 687 888. Staff members can contact the SADGAG Helpline 0800 004 333, SMS line 43323 or send an email to LekgethoBP@tut.ac.za

Nompilo Ngubande, Horticulture student says that she is happy that the institution has departments like the SDS that care about the mental health of students because academics are draining and may cause a decline in a person's mental health, therefore because of that assistance is needed. 🌱



SDS Offices (Pretoria campus building 6-361)



SAED ORIENTATION 2025





GA-RANKUWA CAMPUS

Comes Alive with

INGOBOCO CULTURAL GROUP'S OPENING CONCERT

By Andisiwe Magoda

Tshwane University of Technology's Ga-Rankuwa Campus turned into a vibrant cultural hub on 27 March 2025, as the Ingoboco Cultural Group hosted their much-anticipated Opening Concert. The event drew a large crowd of students and staff, all eager to experience the rich sounds, rhythms, and traditions of Zulu culture.

Traditional music echoed across the campus, creating an electric atmosphere as performers took to the stage in colourful attire, delivering powerful dance routines and soulful songs rooted in Zulu heritage.

"As a Xhosa, it was amazing to see the cultural heritage of the Zulu people celebrated with such love," said Nompumelelo Qulu, a second-year engineering student. "The music, the dance, the attire, everything came together to create an unforgettable experience. I loved every minute of it."

The concert was more than entertainment, it was a powerful display of pride, unity, and cultural storytelling. Students were taken on a journey through history, guided by traditional rhythms and movement that spoke to a deep ancestral legacy.

"It's amazing to see our tradition being kept alive and celebrated by the younger generation," said Sizwe Ngobeni, one of the performers. "Events like this make me proud to be Zulu."

The performers delivered energetic, high-spirited pieces that blended music and dance seamlessly, drawing applause and cheers from the audience throughout.

Known for its diverse student population, Ga-Rankuwa Campus provided the perfect setting for the celebration. The event encouraged appreciation of culture, promoted unity, and celebrated the artistic talent within the student body.

The Ingoboco Cultural Group's Opening Concert set a powerful tone for the year ahead, reminding students of the importance of cultural expression and the value of preserving South Africa's rich heritage.



■ The Ingoboco Cultural Group brings the heat with a high-energy group performance



■ A talented performer takes centre stage at the Ingoboco Cultural Group's Opening Concert



■ Performer at the Ingoboco Cultural Group's Opening Concert

TUT Hosts Workshop on First Steps to Annotating Linguistic Data

By Michelle Mojafi

The Department of Applied Languages, in collaboration with the South African Centre for Digital Language Resources (SADiLaR), facilitated a dynamic workshop titled “First Steps to Annotating Linguistic Data” from Monday, 17 March to Wednesday, 19 March 2025, at TUT’s Soshanguve South Campus.

The three-day workshop was held under the ESCALATOR Programme, with the goal of equipping linguists, language practitioners, and humanities scholars with digital skills essential for annotating linguistic data. Attendees included participants from institutions such as UNISA, Sefako Makgatho University (SMU), South African Bureau of Standards (SABS), and SADiLaR.

“We are working together with universities that don’t necessarily share the same skills, to ensure the harvesting of terms in African religions and make digital technologies available to everyone,” explained Dira Thokwane, one of the workshop organizers.

The training included hands-on sessions facilitated by Marissa Griesel, Project Manager at SADiLaR. She introduced participants to tools such as OpenRefine, CATMA, and Autshumato ITE, all vital for efficient annotation of linguistic data. “This workshop will benefit TUT students by upskilling lecturers and department heads so they can integrate the latest developments in digital humanities into their classrooms,” said Griesel.

Participants were also introduced to various corpus-based technologies that enhance language analysis without relying on manual processing.

The workshop concluded with a closing address by Professor Mashupye Maserumule, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Humanities. He thanked all participants and collaborators for making the workshop a success, particularly acknowledging SADiLaR’s role in empowering scholars with relevant digital skills.

“We are truly grateful for this partnership and for the effort put in by Marissa Griesel and the SADiLaR team. The impact of this initiative will extend far beyond these three days,” said Professor Maserumule, before presenting Marissa with a token of appreciation.

Griesel encouraged participants to stay connected beyond the workshop: “Please don’t hesitate to reach out. Our relationship shouldn’t end here,” she said warmly.

The workshop marked a significant step toward bridging the gap between traditional linguistic practices and modern digital methodologies, preparing students and educators alike for the evolving landscape of language and technology.



Dira Thokwane, event organizer



“Linguists work with data and corpora daily. Technology is here to support that process — these tools make data analysis faster and more efficient”

Mosima Masethe

SMU’s Department of Computer Science and IT

Mosima Masethe from Sefako Makgatho Health Science University, Department of CS and IT



Executive Dean, Professor MH Maserumule



Students Engage in Honest Conversation on *Consent in Relationships*

By Azola Nontkosi

The Directorate of Student Development and Support at Tshwane University of Technology hosted an insightful online webinar via Microsoft Teams, focusing on the importance of consent in relationships. The session aimed to educate students on setting boundaries, understanding the concept of consent, and learning to say “no” in uncomfortable situations.

The webinar unpacked the legal, emotional, and ethical aspects of sexual consent, including the age of legal consent in South Africa. Students were encouraged to engage and reflect on real-life case studies during the session.

“Sexual consent is giving permission to be sexual with someone, actively agreeing that sex is wanted and mutual,” explained Siyabonga Ntshangase, a counselling psychologist and TUT practitioner.

One of the key messages of the session was that consent must be clear and ongoing. The facilitators emphasized that individuals have the right to withdraw consent at any point, even if it was initially given.

The conversation also covered scenarios involving coercion, emotional manipulation, and power dynamics in relationships, where someone may feel forced to agree despite not being comfortable.

“It’s important not to assume consent based on body language or past experiences. It must be clear communication,” said Dr Daniel Ramollo, who also presented during the session.

The interactive webinar gave students an opportunity to ask questions and share their experiences. Many expressed that the session was an eye-opener, as they had never considered the depth and importance of ongoing consent.

“This was very educational. I didn’t realize how many things I didn’t know about consent,” said Lungelo Makamo, a third-year teaching student. “Sometimes we assume someone is agreeing just because they don’t say no, but that’s not always the case. We must respect others when they say no and not pressure or mistreat them.”

The event created a safe, judgment-free platform for students to learn, ask questions, and reflect on their own understanding of consent. The organizers hope this session will spark more open conversations around relationships, boundaries, and respectful communication in the TUT community. 🌱

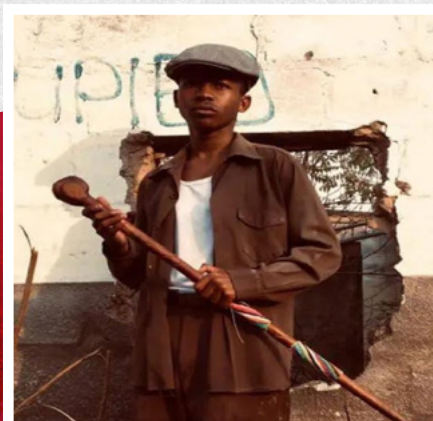
“You can still withdraw consent at any time. When someone says stop, you must stop. And when a person is underage, unconscious, or drunk, they cannot give consent.”

Siyabonga Ntshangase,

a counselling psychologist and TUT practitioner.



■ Siyabonga Eugene Ntshangase
Tshwane University of Technology student development and support practitioner and a psychologist



■ Dr Daniel Sello Ramollo
Psychologist and SDS Practitioner

TUT Champions Student Health and Wellness with *Pre-Valentine's Day* Awareness Campaign



By Andisiwe Magoda

As Valentine's Day approached, conversations around love, relationships, and safe practices took centre stage. Recognising the importance of education and awareness, Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), in collaboration with the Directorate of Health and Wellness, hosted a Pre-Valentine's Day campaign on Thursday, February 13.

The campaign focused on promoting healthy relationships, safe sex practices, and STI awareness among students. "The purpose of today's event is to promote safe sex, knowing your status and self well-being," said Bohlele Tshabalala, Peer Educator.

The event provided students with vital knowledge and resources to navigate the complexities of relationships, consent, and personal health. Lerato Mashaba, a TUT student, expressed her appreciation for the campaign, saying:

"I am grateful that the university organised this event and made these essential services accessible. As a student, it is not always easy to find healthcare support and reliable information about consent and STIs. This campaign has empowered me with knowledge and resources, and I now feel more confident and prepared to make informed decisions about my health and well-being."

The campaign offered a wide range of services to meet the diverse needs of students, including HIV testing and counselling, tuberculosis screening, and reproductive health education. Additionally, students had access to blood pressure as well as information on teen pregnancy, family planning options, and LGBTQI+ awareness.:

Mr Kholofelo Mawela, HIV/AIDS Programmes Coordinator, said that the Pre-Valentines Campaign aims to empower students with vital information about themselves, particularly regarding their health.

"Our students have access to on-campus health services, similar to what they're used to at home. Clinics are available at all university campuses, and we encourage students to visit our Health and Wellness Centre to avoid seeking risky, backdoor services that promise quick fixes, such as same-day pregnancy termination. Regardless of how often a student visits us, our medical professionals maintain confidentiality and uphold the highest standards of discretion." Mawela added.

The event demonstrated TUT's commitment to fostering a safe, informed, and health-conscious student community. With ongoing initiatives like this, the university continues to empower students with necessary tools to make responsible choices and maintain their overall well-being. 🌟



■ Building Science students and staff members



■ Building Science students and staff members

The motion of feels

These little notes in my diary are dedicated to my mother. Though she is late, her presence never ceases to amaze me. Her love, touch and care continue to lay a beautiful foundation in my life. Her love was, and still is, so gentle.

It awakens a mix of emotions within me, lifting my gratitude, power and light. She stood strong and unshakable through both deprived, and affluent atmospheres.

Just like a river that keeps on flowing in the dry season, Her love remains constant.

Kare setshego sa gagwe setlisha Lethabo pelong yaka, keikutlwa ke Thabile ebile kele manobonobong.

Ke bolela ka mme motswadi,
Lerato la pelo yaka,, Mo swara thipa ka bogaleng,
Intsika yam, indlovukazi yam.

This is not just love, but a godly love. I am speaking of a love that began while I was still a fetus. A love that forged an unbreakable connection, one that not even the cutting of an umbilical cord could ever sever.

Oh, how persistent is her love! How unconditional is her wisdom! Her presence is infinite. Though the time borrowed was brief, she played her role with pride! She left memories that in my heart will reside. Just like a rainbow, her love will forever remind me of the covenant I had with her.

By Monchela Kabelo Shawn (221 531 507)



Bald

Loss of hair, fortunately not loss of air
Dear cancer you are a death scare.
Stage four was just a lot for my toddler to bear.
Doctors results were just atrocious words to hear.
The journey seemed like it had no end.

Radiation and chemotherapy made my baby to have loss of hair.
But I'm overjoyed as it is not loss life and loss of air.
The baldness of my poor toddler symbolise new beginnings.
The initium and revival of hope and meaningful life.
Because the cancer never stood a chance In my toddlers life.

Loss of hair but fortunately not loss of life.
Strive daughter, you are cancer free.
This is your second chance to be wild and free.
Be triumphant with your baldness.
As it symbolise how you weathered the storm.

By Dimakatso



DED Hosts Poetry Reading and Writing Competition

By: Nombuso Sithole

The Directorate of Extracurricular Development (DED) hosted a poetry reading and writing competition at the Pretoria Campus on Thursday, 20 March 2025. The event was held to celebrate love, given that February is known as the month of love, and to highlight the importance of reading and writing.

Participants were given love-themed topics to choose from and tasked with crafting original poems. The competition's main aim was to encourage a culture of writing and to showcase the power of self-expression through poetry. Contestants presented their own work to an audience that was left in awe by the talent on display.

"I noticed a gap in the culture of reading and writing among students," said Bafana Solomon Nkuna, drama and book club coach at Pretoria Campus. "That's why I'm introducing this culture at our institution, to encourage students to write and share their work, whether through poetry or in other creative ways," he added.

Members of the audience were also invited to perform, and many took the stage, impressing the crowd with their spontaneous pieces. These performers were encouraged to join the poetry club to further nurture their talent.

Maureen Ngobeni, drama and book club coach for the Arts and Arcadia campuses, shared that although organizing the event was challenging, the outcome was worth it. "It was exciting to witness young people with such passion and a unique way of expressing themselves," she said.

"Writing doesn't always require formal training, sometimes it just takes one drop of ink to leave a lasting impression."

Speakers at the event emphasized the importance of normalizing writing and sharing creative work. Many people write for themselves without realizing the potential impact their words could have on others. Attendees were encouraged to join writing and reading clubs not for the sake of accolades, but to inspire and uplift others.

"As a contestant and winner of this competition, I'm so delighted by the experience," said Kabelo Shawn, one of the winners. "It feels amazing to be recognized, and I'm motivated to continue writing. I encourage other students to participate in future competitions, it's a great platform to discover yourself and your path through reading and writing."



Winner Nonchalant Kabelo Shawn



Audience at the competition



winning contestants of the poetry, writing & reading competition

Directorate of Student Governance
and Leadership Development

2025

MOTIVATIONAL *Series*



Abner Mariri



SJ Sbu



Dr Tumi



Koketso Molwaolwe



Linda Ntuli



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Oncemore Six



Puleng March



Sanele Zulu



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Takie Ndou



Xoli

07 May
2025

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CAMPUS
13:00

08 May
2025

MBOMBELA
CAMPUS
13:00

09 May
2025

GARANKUWA
CAMPUS
11:00

14 May
2025

PRETORIA
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10:00

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SOSHANGUVE
CAMPUS
11:00

22 May
2025

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10:00



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Nedbank and TUT Join Forces to Equip Students with Financial Literacy

By Chumile Mafrika

Tshwane University of Technology's (TUT) Pretoria Campus hosted a financial literacy workshop in collaboration with Nedbank and the Student Development and Support (SDS) unit on 17 March 2025. The event, themed Level Up Your Finances, took place at Dinokeng and drew a large turnout of enthusiastic students.

The workshop aimed to empower students with essential financial skills, covering key areas such as the psychology of money, budgeting, saving, investing, credit management, and entrepreneurship. It was held in two interactive sessions, each designed to provide practical insights into money management and planning for financial wellness.

"Today's event was organised by Nedbank, SDS, and the UCDG, a grant that supports educational awareness campaigns. The goal was to equip students with financial literacy tools they can apply in their lives," explained Mimi Namalala, SDS Practitioner.

In the first session, students explored the psychology of money, budgeting, and the different types of investments, short-term, mid-term, and long-term. The content was well-received, with many students opening student accounts with Nedbank on the spot after learning about saving and investing.

The second session delved into financial planning and goal setting, credit and debt management, and most notably, entrepreneurship and side hustles. Students with small businesses were given a platform to present their entrepreneurial ventures, fostering a spirit of support and collaboration among peers.

"There are many student entrepreneurs on campus, and it was inspiring to see them share their businesses. We learned that side hustles are great, as long as they're legal and well-managed," said a third-year marketing student who attended the session.



■ Charmaine Moola, Nedbank Facilitator



■ UCDP students distributing the nedbank products



■ UCDP students distributing the nedbank products

The Nedbank team, led by financial facilitators like Charmaine Moola, kept students engaged through interactive discussions and one-on-one conversations.

"This financial wellness workshop aimed to equip TUT students with essential financial skills. It was a significant initiative that addressed a critical need among the student community," said Charmaine Moola, Nedbank Facilitator.

Students were rewarded for their participation with gifts, lunch packs, and access to on-site account activation services. The event created a welcoming environment that encouraged learning, networking, and taking the first steps toward financial independence.

The workshop concluded on a high note, leaving students motivated and better informed about how to manage their money wisely. 🌱

A Spontaneous Blind Date with a Book *Captivates Arts Campus*

By: Michelle Mojafi

The Directorate of Extracurricular Development (DED) at the Tshwane University of Technology's Arts Campus brought books to life in an unexpected way on Wednesday, 26 March 2025, by hosting a heart-warming event titled "A Blind Date with a Book." The creative initiative aimed to introduce students to new reading material while encouraging them to explore the often-overlooked campus library.

The event was a refreshing twist on traditional reading drives. Wrapped books without titles or summaries were set out, allowing students to "go on a blind date" with literature. The mystery created excitement, curiosity, and meaningful conversations.

"The reason I decided to host 'Blind Date with a Book' was to spark and plant the idea of activities that will take place in honour of National Library Week next term," said Maureen Ngobeni, event organiser and Arts Campus alumna. "As a former Arts student myself, I know how intimidating it can be to walk into the library. But the truth is, literature plays a crucial role in academic excellence, even in the arts," she added.

The event highlighted that books are not just academic tools, they can be emotional companions. Many students found themselves bonding with genres they'd never explored before.

"Did you know that there is no partner more loyal than a book? I found my loyal partner today, and I'm ready to mingle," said Lesedi Nkosi, a Performing Arts student. "This blind date showed me that not all books or libraries are boring."

For some, the surprise was a book on serious themes like COVID-19, while others discovered lighter reads. Rearabilwe Mangena, a student in Performing Arts (Applied Theatre and Script Writing), was pleasantly surprised. "I'm reading an interesting book titled Things to Do in the Dark. I never thought I'd pick up something like this, but it's teaching me about places to visit in South Africa. It's actually very exciting and useful!"

While some students didn't quite connect with their "dates," the majority enjoyed the experience and left inspired to visit the library more often. The DED announced that similar events will be hosted in the future to promote a culture of reading and make literature more accessible and fun.

The event proved that even in the digital age, a well-wrapped book can still win hearts. 📖



Maureen Ngobeni - Event organizer



Rearabilwe Mangena- Performing Arts (Applied theatre and script writing)



DED ambassadors who took part in the event

TUT Students Shine at National Furniture Design Awards

By Lindokuhle Nkosi

At the Prestigious DTIC National Furniture Design Competition, held at the Kyalami Grand Prix and International Expo Centre, two young creatives from the Tshwane University of Technology have proven that brilliance, innovation, and passion are alive in South Africa's design community. Sibusiso Mokhuana walked away with first prize, while Tshepiso Maluleka secured a well-deserved third place finish.

For Sibusiso Mokhuana this victory is more than just a trophy, it's a milestone in a purposeful journey. "Winning this competition is an incredible honor. It's both a validation of my vision and a reminder of the responsibility that comes with creating meaningful designs," he shared.

His winning piece was inspired by South Africa's cultural heritage, thoughtfully blending functionality, storytelling, and sustainability. He used locally sourced wood and cutting-edge techniques like CNC machining to produce a sleek yet durable design. But the road wasn't without challenges. "Balancing aesthetics with functionality was tough. Sometimes the smallest tweaks make the biggest difference," said Sibusiso.

Tshepiso Maluleka's inspiration came from something deeply personal, her love for books. "I thought about how I'd want my own bookshelf to look like," she said. Her design was a fusion of warmth simplicity, and geometric artistry, made with plywood and enhanced by integrated LED lighting.

While her journey also had its hurdles, especially with structural elements, she stayed motivated by her vision. "Design is about problem solving. Every challenge is a chance to improve," said Tshepiso.

Both winners credited TUT's strong academic and creative environment for their success. "TUT gave us access to hands on learning, advanced workshops, and a solid design community," said Sibusiso. Tshepiso on the other hand highlighted the influence of her lecturers. "Mr. Hein Dubrey and Mr. Jodean Steenkamp were incredibly supportive. Their feedback pushed me to think beyond the norm," she said.

Even after their success, the two innovators are keen on taking things to the next level as Sibusiso is set to begin a design internship at Homewood as part of his prize. He's also working on launching his winning design into the market and expanding his Enviro Puzzle project, which recently won another national design competition. As for Tshepiso, she plans to explore sustainability focused product design, while continuing to refine her skills and build her professional portfolio.

To other aspiring designers at TUT and across South Africa, both students emphasize courage, creativity, and culture. "Go for it," Tshepiso says. "Take risks, trust your vision, and showcase what makes you different." Sibusiso adds: "Embrace your cultural identity and keep learning. That's how we'll make our mark on the global design scene." 🌍



■ Tshepiso Maluleka



■ Sibusiso Mokhuana



■ Sibusiso Mokhuana design



■ Tshepiso Maluleka's design

Leadership Breakfast Talk Series

Ignites a Spirit of Growth Among Future Leaders

By Michelle Mojafi

The Directorate of Student Governance and Leadership Development (SGLD) hosted a compelling Leadership Breakfast Talk Series on Friday, 28 March 2026, at the Pretoria Campus Leadership Lab. The event was aimed at elevating leadership among students and equipping them with the tools necessary to succeed in the professional world.

The talk featured Nathalie Hendricks, the Regional Public Affairs, Communications, and Sustainability Manager at Coca-Cola Beverages South Africa, as the keynote speaker. Hendricks delivered an inspiring address that touched on time management, financial literacy, interview preparation, and career development. "The reason I attended the session today was to engage with young leaders and share some of my experiences about preparing for the world of work," said Hendricks.

"Young people must understand how to show up in order to succeed whether that means volunteering, developing soft skills, or simply gaining experience. It's our responsibility, as the older generation, to plough back, guide, and hand over the tools of leadership to the next generation," said Nathalie

She also emphasized the importance of balancing academics with real-world experience, encouraging students to volunteer in their free time while remaining committed to their studies.

The students responded enthusiastically, posing questions about career readiness, qualifications, and navigating diverse industries. One standout question asked whether students need to study beyond their current field to gain employment, a concern many students face in today's competitive job market.

Some attendees shared how the session exceeded their expectations. "I got more than I expected. It gave me a core understanding of what I need to do to exceed my limitations and take practical steps to succeed," said Njabulo Ngoben, a student in Administrative Finance.

Lethabo Bila, a Supply Chain Management student, added: "I learned that time management is key, and that before you help others, you must first help yourself. When you show up, even for something small, you'll thank yourself later. Time wasted is never regained."

The event successfully fulfilled its purpose of motivating and empowering student leaders, thanks to the powerful insights shared by Hendricks and the active participation of students. The Leadership Breakfast Talk Series left a lasting impression, reinforcing the importance of leadership, initiative, and lifelong learning in shaping South Africa's future change-makers. 🌱



■ Dr Gugulethu Xaba- Director SGLD



■ Dr Mpho Sharon Makgedi Makaleng- Section head, Teaching and learning



■ Nathalie Hendricks- regional public affairs communications and sustainability manager for CocaCola beverages SA

TUT Celebrates Human Rights Day with *Dr Nasiphi Moya*

By Michelle Mojafi

The TUT Community Advice Centre, under the Department of Law, Safety and Security Management, hosted a vibrant Human Rights Day celebration on 20 March 2025 at the Soshanguve South Campus Student Centre. The atmosphere was buzzing with excitement as students gathered to commemorate the day alongside the Executive Mayor of Tshwane, Dr Nasiphi Moya.

The event aimed to raise awareness among students about their human rights and responsibilities through an engaging programme that included a lively quiz session and a powerful keynote address by Dr Moya.

“Do not give up on your ambition because it is better than what you have achieved in the past. Remember, you all came here to learn, focus on that and not anything else.”

Dr Moya urged students, encouraging them to remain committed to their goals despite life's challenges.

She addressed pressing issues facing students, including substance abuse and crime, and called on them to make positive choices that would contribute to their personal success and well-being.

A quiz on human rights followed, with winners receiving T-shirts and bags. The session wasn't just about rewards; it was an engaging way to educate students on their rights and responsibilities as active members of society and future leaders.

“As we celebrated Human Rights Day, it was exciting to be visited by the executive mayor. We learned where human rights originate and discussed how to tackle crime within the institution,” said Theminkosi Mshefu, a Legal student.

In a remarkable moment, Dr Moya made a commitment to assist the University in removing pollution around campus and in creating a cleaner and safer learning environment. The announcement was warmly received by students, who applauded the mayor's practical efforts to support their well-being.

“Her speech was a powerful call to action. It made me reflect on my role in promoting human rights and consider how I can contribute to this important work,” said Ayanda Nkosi, a Policing student.

The event not only informed but inspired, leaving students with a renewed sense of purpose and a stronger understanding of their role in upholding human rights within and beyond the university environment.



■ Charmaine Moola, Nedbank Facilitator