

ANNUALREPORT



A question of balance

2018 & 2019

Extended Studies
The Trojan Academic Initiative (TAI)
Student Peer Mentoring Programme



**Student Peer
Mentoring Programme**
TROJAN ACADEMIC INITIATIVE



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

ANNUALREPORT 2018 & 2019

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Introduction

THIS REPORT ENDEAVOURS TO inform all interested stakeholders about the activities and accomplishments of Rhodes University's Trojan Academic Initiative (TAI) Student Peer Mentoring Programme in 2018 and 2019.



The TAI Programme aims to offer socio-emotional support to first year students from under-resourced backgrounds as they adjust to the multiple demands of a new and challenging tertiary educational environment. The TAI, part of the Extended curriculum, undertakes to provide an opportunity for successful senior student mentors, often first generation university entrants, to draw on their previous experience. In so doing, mentors are able to offer guidance to their younger less-experienced peers who find themselves in similar circumstances.



In partnering each first year Extended Studies student with a successful senior student, the TAI programme aligns itself closely with the core purposes of the Extended Studies Unit (ESU). The Unit forms part of the university's strategic transformation plan. It provides a framework for addressing community and economic upliftment issues by ensuring 'access and success' for disadvantaged students.



The Extended Studies purpose statement notes that the programme has "been defined by members of the university as 'a vital part of the university's goal of widening access to



include learners with potential, from a more diverse range of educational, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, whose disadvantaged backgrounds may have hindered their school leaving performance” (Boughey, 2010: 11); and as a programme situated to “ensure access for working class and rural poor students with potential” (Badat, 2011).

This purpose statement elaborates that the Extended Studies programme is understood to be a mutually beneficial arrangement between Rhodes University and Extended Studies students. The programme’s core purposes are expressed as follows:

- to provide epistemological and ontological access to students from designated groups whose cultural, socio-economic or educational conditions could inhibit their success in a university with western academic traditions;
- to expand Rhodes’ institutional culture, environment and practices to be more inclusive and supportive of a wider range of students.

Rhodes University benefitted from approximately 120 TAI mentors in 2018 and 2019. Mentors partnered with 300 first year mentees across four faculties, namely Commerce; Humanities; Science; and Pharmacy.





The Mission

The mission of the Extended Studies Trojan Academic Initiative (TAI) Student Peer Mentoring Programme is to provide an organised framework which encourages mentors to share their time, skills, experience and learnings with first year students, as they grapple with the complex transition between school and university. Collaborating with a mentor and being part of a regular mentoring group of other first year students can make a critical difference to the young person who is steadily guided and supported as she enters university, and in the time to follow. Caring for a younger student can also be hugely formative for mentors as they develop critical skills necessary for assisting their mentees.



TAI Staff

THE TAI STAFF EXPERIENCED SIGNIFICANT SHIFTS in 2018 and 2019 respectively. Professor Chrissie Boughey, TAI Programme Leader since inception of the programme in 2003, took on a Research Professorship with the Centre for Postgraduate Studies at Rhodes University, following her tenure as Deputy Vice Chancellor: Academic & Student Affairs. Professor Boughey's new post meant her taking leave of the TAI headship. Professor Boughey proved to be an exceptional TAI leader as well as a tireless TAI champion during her sixteen year-long tenure. Chrissie's commitment to the Extended Studies project, its staff and its students, as well as her significant efforts towards keeping the TAI funded, are enormously valued.

The TAI warmly welcomed CHERTL Head of Department, Professor Jo-Anne Vorster, as the new TAI Leader in 2018. The TAI remains deeply appreciative of Professor Vorster's commitment towards the furtherance of the Extended Studies TAI programme.

Dr Carmen Oltmann has a remarkable history with the TAI Student Peer Mentoring Programme at Rhodes University. Dr Oltmann, now Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy at Rhodes, is the TAI's longest-standing member of staff along with Professor Boughey, both of whom were instrumental in the programme's inception in 2003. Dr Oltmann's sixteen years of dedication to the development of the TAI have been borne out by the significant investment of her time and expertise, as well as her ceaseless passion for mentoring which is based on her belief that mentoring works.

Dr Leonie Goosen took over Dr Oltmann's TAI Pharmacy facilitation role and responsibilities at the end of 2018. The TAI is very pleased to welcome Dr Goosen, who has already proven to be a dedicated facilitator.

Colleagues Mr Masixole Booï and Ms Corinne Knowles assumed leadership of the TAI programme while Nichola van der Poel took leave of her TAI co-ordination responsibilities in 2018 and 2019. The TAI thanks both Masixole and Corinne for their time and energy. Innovations made by Ms Knowles have enriched the Certificate and will continue to benefit mentors, and in turn their mentees, participating in the 2020 TAI short course. ESU lecturer Ms Judith Reynolds kindly and capably agreed to act as the TAI Humanities mentor facilitator in 2019 while Corinne Knowles co-ordinated the programme, for which the TAI expresses its gratitude.

Nichola van der Poel resumed responsibility for co-ordination and teaching of the TAI programme in 2020. Nichola sincerely thanks all of her TAI colleagues for their much-valued contributions.

Meet the TAI Staff



Professor Jo-Anne Vorster
TAI PROGRAMME LEADER

PhD (Rhodes University)
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PROFESSOR JO-ANNE VORSTER is head of the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning. She is interested in how the curriculum, including teaching and learning practices and assessment can contribute to success for the majority of university students. To this end she has contributed to the design and facilitation of postgraduate diploma courses for university lecturers as well as for practitioners in the field of academic development. Academic development is concerned with the advancement of teaching and learning in universities. Her research interests include academic staff development, curriculum development practices, and student learning. Jo-Anne has worked in higher education for more than twenty-five years and is passionate about the role that mentors and tutors can play in supporting undergraduate student learning.



Denise Jeggels

TAI & ESU SECRETARY

Dip. Secretarial certificate (GADRA Commercial Centre); Office Administration Certificate (Rhodes University); Supervisor Certificate (Rhodes University)

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DENISE joined Rhodes University in 2006 as a clerical intern at the Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership. She joined CHERTL/Extended Studies Unit in 2009 as data capturer and secretary, where she works as a data capturer at CHERTL in the mornings and as a secretary at ESU in the afternoons. At CHERTL Denise is responsible for capturing student responses onto the Evaluation Assistant for lecturers from the various departments when teaching and/or courses are evaluated. She oversees the scanning of test and exam-related multiple choice response sheets. In addition, Denise is responsible for all administrative duties and financial services for ESU/TAI, and she assists with student queries.



Corinne Knowles

HUMANITIES FACILITATOR 2018 AND TAI CO-ORDINATOR 2019

B.A. (UPE); HDE (UCT); MA (Rhodes)

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CORINNE KNOWLES is a lecturer in the humanities Extended Studies (ES) Programme at Rhodes University. Formerly chair of the Women's Academic Solidarity Association at Rhodes, and active member of various progressive staff collectives over the years, she is a gender and social justice activist. Ms Knowles co-ordinates the TAI mentoring programme for ES humanities students and maintains mentoring relationships with many past and present students. She teaches courses on African feminism, Butler's performance theory, and provides academic support for Politics and Sociology first year students. She is currently reading towards a PhD degree which considers the relevance of the university from students' perspectives. Before entering academia 10 years ago, Ms Knowles was a high school teacher, an NGO practitioner and fundraiser. She continues to be involved in

NGOs in Makhanda. Ms Knowles has published a book of poetry and has written an award-winning play.



Dr Carmen Oltmann

PHARMACY FACILITATOR 2003-2018

BSc (Med) Hons, MSc, BPharm, PGDHE, PhD
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DR OLTMANN obtained her Pharmacy degree (as a mature student) at Rhodes University in 1999, completed her internship at Cecilia Makiwane Hospital, and worked as a pharmacist before joining the Faculty of Pharmacy. She was Head of the Pharmacy Practice division for many years, and is currently Deputy Dean of the Faculty. Her areas of interest include Pharmacy Education, Sports Pharmacy, mentoring, critical realism, and social pharmacy.



Masixole Booi

TAI CO-ORDINATOR 2018

BA (NMU), Hon (NMU); MA (Rhodes University)
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MASIXOLE BOOI'S MA research focused on the Training and Retaining the Next Generation of Academics: The Program for Accelerated Development at Rhodes University and Higher Education Institutional Transformation. He is currently studying towards his PHD in Sociology of Education. After completing his MA he joined Tshisimani Centre for Activist Education as a Research Fellow and also worked for Equal Education as a Deputy Head of the Eastern Cape Office.



Amon Magadza

COMMERCE FACILITATOR

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MR AMON MAGADZA is currently a Computer Literacies Coordinator for CHERTL - Extended Studies Unit and teaching the Science Computer Skills course. He has taught in all the three computer literacy programmes offered at Rhodes University. He

strongly believes in mentoring as it empowers both the mentor and mentee relationships, and enhances a sense of belonging. Amon grew up and studied in Zimbabwe Computer Studies at, KPTC. He has been teaching Computer Science in the tertiary education environment for many years. He is interested in exploring ICT curriculum development and Student Support.



Mr Nkosinathi Madondo
SCIENCE FACILITATOR

B.Paed (Arts), UDW; BA (Honours), UDW; MA (English & Media Studies), UKZN
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MR MADONDO has an extensive history of student development which he has undertaken since the late 1990s as a graduate assistance and he is now a most valuable academic in the Science Extended Curriculum Programme, at Rhodes University, which aims to broaden access to higher education for students whose schooling left them ill-equipped for success. Mr Madondo prepares students for mainstream courses in Science through the discipline of Science itself. Unlike the deficit model of the notion of the gaps in generic skills that students bring with them, which fails to provide genuine access to the practices of the field and leave the university and its structures outside of any critique, Mr Madondo works hard to make the ways of 'doing and being' accessible to the students in his class so that the 'mysteries' of scientific language are dismantled. Mr Madondo is a serious person in that he is genuinely focussed on supporting his students in as thorough a way as possible. However, he is also light-hearted in that he always has a ready smile for everyone. His commitment to ensuring meaningful access to powerful knowledge is not to be doubted. Mr Madondo's interests are in critical thinking, academic literacies, student development and decoloniality of knowledge.



Dr Leonie Goosen

PHARMACY FACILITATOR 2019

BSc (Hons), MSc, HDE, PGDHE, PhD
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DR GOOSEN joined the Faculty of Pharmacy at Rhodes in 2010. She has taught Physical Science, General, Organic, Industrial, Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Chemistry to learners, students, educators, subject advisors, cleaners, administrative and factory floor staff. Her areas of interest include Pharmaceutical Chemistry Education, Mentoring, Student Learning, Natural Product Chemistry and playing chamber music



Judith Reynolds

HUMANITIES FACILITATOR 2019

BA Hons (Rhodes), MA (Rhodes), PGDHE (Rhodes), DELTA (RSA/Cambridge)
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Judith Reynolds completed an MA in Linguistics and English Language at Rhodes in 1997. She then taught English as a Foreign Language in Poland for 6 years. In the summers she taught English and then Academic Literacy in the UK. While she was teaching EFL she completed the Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults. In 2005 she returned to Rhodes to teach on the new Humanities Extended Studies programme. In 2007 she completed the Post-Graduate Diploma in Higher Education. Her favourite thing about teaching in the ES programme is meeting so many amazing and resilient young people. In her years of teaching she has realised that you can't treat students as brains or intellects. They bring their whole selves into the classroom, including their personal histories and their emotions. Judith tries to acknowledge and work with the 'whole student' in her teaching. Her interests are reading, ballet, yoga and she runs health workshops.

TAI Mentors



TAI MENTORS BEGIN EACH YEAR with a day-long mentor development workshop in February. This workshop inducts students into the programme and attempts to equip them to guide their mentees through the first semester. The mentor development workshop also enables social interaction with mentors across the various faculties.

Mentors participate in the following sessions: Introduction to the TAI seminar programme and faculty facilitators; Achieving an NQF Level 5 peer mentoring qualification; Mentors' code of conduct and terms of agreement; Mentoring challenges and opportunities; The needs of first year students; Journal-writing and reflection skills; Confidentiality; Team-building activities; as well as an always-popular session - Q & A with past TAI mentors.

Further, mentors have the opportunity to develop a number of essential life skills during fortnightly TAI seminars, spanning the first semester. Seminars include discussions and activities related to stress management and time management, as well study skills and students' philosophies of mentoring. Students also participate in a session which explores ideas about how one might manage on a limited budget, which is a common challenge for many of our students. The TAI co-ordinator facilitates these seminars, which work to assist mentors in guiding their mentees. Student feedback suggests that seminars also build valuable

capacities which mentors incorporate into their own daily lives.

The TAI provides the opportunity for mentors to complete a portfolio of assignments related to the above seminars, should they wish to optimise their development throughout the course. The portfolio is concluded with an 'Evaluation of being a mentor' assignment, which is a valuable reflective exercise for mentors and the TAI co-ordinator alike.

Faculty facilitators, all of whom are academics at Rhodes University, play a key role in facilitating weekly meetings with mentors throughout the first semester. These confidential sessions offer a safe space in which mentors can talk through issues arising with their mentees, and sometimes themselves, during the course of each week.

The facilitator's role is to create a space in which other mentors in the group have the opportunity to share suggestions with their peers regarding issues arising, while providing overarching guidance. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to assume accountability for their relationship, with the facilitator acting as a direct intermediary only in exceptional circumstances. Mentors keep a regular critically reflective journal which enables them to reflect on the mentoring experience and their learnings. Facilitators read journals at points throughout the semester and a dialogue develops between mentor and facilitator. In addition, the journal is an important part of the mentoring process and is included in mentors' final portfolio submissions.

Students who complete assignments and submit their portfolios obtain an NQF Level 5 Certificate in Peer Mentoring, while those mentors who choose to attend seminars without completing assignments receive a Certificate of Participation. In 2018, 48 mentors achieved their TAI Certificates in Peer Mentoring and six received TAI Certificates of Participation. In 2019, 45 mentors achieved their TAI Peer Mentoring Certificates and 9 received TAI Certificates of Participation.

2018 & 2019 Graduates

Achievements of Extended Studies

Trojan Academic Initiative Students

2018

The number of former Extended Studies students who graduated from Rhodes University in 2018 with their respective degrees, is as follows:

BA	Bachelor of Arts	22
BAH	Bachelor of Arts with Honours	3
BCOH	Bachelor of Commerce with Honours	4
BCOM	Bachelor of Commerce	28
BECO	Bachelor of Economics	1
BPHA	Bachelor of Pharmacy	6
BSC	Bachelor of Science	27
BSCH	Bachelor of Science with Honours	6
BSS	Bachelor of Social Science	20
BSSH	Bachelor of Social Science with Honours	5
HDAC	Postgraduate Diploma in Accountancy	6
MA	Master of Arts	1
MCOM2	Master of Commerce Financial Markets	1
MSC	Master of Science	3
MSC1	Master of Science	1

MSS1	Master of Social Science	1
PDEM	Postgraduate Diploma in Enterprise Management	9
PDMM	Postgraduate Diploma in Media Management	4
PGCEF	Postgraduate Certificate in Education (FP)	7
PGCEI	Postgraduate Certificate in Education (IP)	1
PGCES	Postgraduate Certificate in Education (SP/FET)	14
PGTAX	Postgraduate Diploma in Taxation	1
PHD6	PhD (Science)	2

2019

The number of former Extended Studies students who graduated from Rhodes University in 2019 with their respective degrees, is as follows:

BA	Bachelor of Arts	14
BAH	Bachelor of Arts with Honours	5
BCOH	Bachelor of Commerce with Honours	7
BCOM	BACHELOR OF COMMERCE	29
BED-H	Bachelor of Education with Honours	4
BPHA	Bachelor of Pharmacy	4
BSC	Bachelor of Science	25
BSCH	Bachelor of Science with Honours	12
BSS	Bachelor of Social Science	26
BSSH	Bachelor of Social Science with Honours	8

HDAC	Postgraduate Diploma in Accountancy	1
MCOM	Master of Commerce	1
MSC	Master of Science	1
MSS1	Master of Social Science	2
PDEM	Postgraduate Diploma in Enterprise Management	4
PDMM	Postgraduate Diploma in Media Management	1
PGBA	Postgraduate Diploma in Business Analysis	1
PGCEF	Postgraduate Certificate in Education (FP)	3
PGCES	Postgraduate Certificate in Education (SP/FET)	11
PGCIP	Postgraduate Certificate in Education	6
PGDH2	Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education	1

*Congratulations to all of our graduates!
We are proud of you.*



2020 TAI Graduate Stories



AVELA MBILINI

Claims Investigator at *Prime Meridian Direct*

Discovering your career path

AT THE AGE OF 17, Avela Mbilini graduated from St Christopher's in King William's Town with distinctions in Economics and Business Studies. She credits this achievement with sparking her interest in pursuing a career in Commerce. So it came to be that Avela, who was born and raised in the small town of Harding in KwaZulu Natal, joined the Commerce Extended Studies Programme (CESP) at Rhodes University in 2014.

The Extended Studies programme, particularly its Trojan Academic Initiative (TAI) Student Peer Mentoring Programme, left a lasting impression on the former Deputy Head Girl. "It helped me very much to settle into varsity and to see that having to complete my degree in four years, instead of three, was not a curse."

Avela reflects that the ability to relate to one's mentor in such a programme, by recognising that they too were once in your position, is of utmost importance. During her last year at Rhodes in 2017, Avela chose to become a TAI mentor herself and expresses gratitude for the guiding nature of the programme: "It helped me grow as an individual."

Uncertainty about one's future, and about one's choice of subjects in order to realise that future, is a feeling understood by many students. Avela was no different. As an undergraduate student, she was unsure of which subjects to select as her majors. She was soon exposed to the financial sector through the *Investec* Navigate Programme, however. This opportunity was afforded to her through the Commerce Extended Studies Programme. "This sector became the answer to my lost career path. I found something that I was genuinely interested in," shares Avela.

Avela achieved her Bachelor of Commerce degree in 2017, followed by her Postgraduate Diploma in Enterprise Management from the Rhodes University Business School.

Avela currently works as a Claims Investigator in the Motor Claims Department in *Prime Meridian Direct*. This direct marketing financial services business focusses on personal line products in the motor, life and health insurance markets. “The Extended Studies played a huge role in how my career path was decided...had it not been for the *Investec* opportunity afforded by the Commerce Extended Studies Programme, I do not know how else I would have discovered the vast sector and the job market that I currently work in today.”

Avela’s plans for the future include obtaining her Financial Advisory and Intermediary Services (FAIS) accreditation, and completing her Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree.

NKOSAZANA RULUMENI

Software Quality Analyst for *LexisNexis*

Overcoming the odds

MANY THINGS SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE for Nkosazana Rulumeni when she was a learner in high school. After attending the National Arts Festival in Makhanda, however, Nkosazana was drawn to the intimate and supportive nature of Rhodes University. After joining the Extended Studies Programme, Nkosazana found her time at the university to be smoother than she expected.

Originally from the small town of Dutywa, Nkosazana was inspired by her mother’s decision to go back to school. “If she could do it, I also can”, reflects the Bachelor of Commerce graduate.

Nkosazana fell in love with Accounting at a young age. She describes her high school as “a space where your dreams weren’t really a thing”. It was this same school, however, that introduced her to the subject of Accounting and which ultimately led her to apply to Rhodes University. This application was successful, and in 2013 Nkosazana joined the Trojan Academic Initiative (TAI) Student Peer Mentoring Programme where she was partnered with an experienced, senior student mentor in the same faculty.

As part of this mentee group with other first year peers, Nkosazana enjoyed having an instant network of friends and colleagues with whom she could share her newfound university experiences. Nkosazana worked as a TAI mentor in 2015 and 2016, during which time she valued the opportunity to offer the same support and guidance to her mentees as she had received from her mentor during first year.



Nkosazana graduated in 2017, triple majoring in Information Systems, Management, and Economics. She then furthered her education by attaining her Honours degree in Financial Management in 2018.

Currently, Nkosazana is a Software Quality Analyst for *LexisNexis*. She describes her role in the company as “representing the user” by ensuring that the website functions efficiently. She credits her time in the Rhodes Extended Studies Programme for motivating her in securing this position, as she believes the programme encourages students to follow their own path.

NOKUTHULA MNISI

Chartered Accountant

Seeking help is brave



IN GRADE 6 AND ATTENDING The King’s Court Christian School, Nokuthula Mnisi was immediately enthralled by numbers - and never looked back. Nokuthula’s goal of becoming a Chartered Accountant was central, so applying to Rhodes University was a significant step towards accomplishing this.

Born in Tzaneen, Limpopo and raised by her grandparents, Nokuthula proved to be determined and nurturing from a young age. She was actively involved in community engagement in high school and she had a love of cooking for others: “I love seeing people come together and celebrate life through a meal cooked with love.”

In grade 6, Nokuthula decided to pursue a career in Accounting. “I made it a point in high school to bring that dream to life. I was intentional with it all the way through to university”, says the now 25-year-old graduate.

As part of the Trojan Academic Initiative (TAI) Student Peer Mentoring Programme, Nokuthula observes that sometimes its students were stigmatised as being lazy. Nokuthula believes differently: “I hope we all take pride in our journey because if anything, being in Extended Studies does not mean we are incapable. It means we take our future seriously, and we are unafraid to seek the necessary aid to lead us through a successful university experience.”

Nokuthula was a TAI first year mentee in 2012 as well as a TAI mentor in 2015. As a mentee, she valued being part of a support system where guidance was readily available. In the light of this experience, Nokuthula aimed to create a similar environment for mentees in her mentoring group.

A Bachelor of Commerce graduate, Nokuthula was awarded a Golden Key International Society membership in 2013. She was further awarded the

Ndedana Student Peer Mentoring Certificate of Participation in 2014, and the TAI Certificate in Peer Mentoring in 2015.

Nokuthula credits her friends and family for positively impacting her academic pursuits, together with facilitator of the TAI Commerce programme, Mr Amon Magadza.

SIKELELWA JO-AN QWAZI

Singer, songwriter and actress;
CEO *La-Couples Holdings Company*

Singing her way to the top



SIKELELWA JO-AN QWAZI, KNOWN as Siki Jo-An, enrolled at Rhodes University to pursue music. With two distinctions in matric Siki did not understand why her only way into the institution was through the Extended Studies Programme, however she soon saw the benefits which it provided.

Hailing from the Kwa-Zakhele township in Port Elizabeth, 27-year-old Siki Jo-An came to Rhodes in 2012 with dreams of furthering her education in music. From a young age, Siki found herself to be a creative individual. Despite showing promise in many academic fields, the need to continue studying Drama and Music persisted. “My life was so balanced that I was one of the top achievers in my grade”, says Siki.

Siki set her sights on Rhodes University as it allowed her to study both subjects simultaneously: “When I auditioned to study Music at Rhodes the process was much easier for me, as I already had a musical background academically.”

In the Extended Studies Programme, Siki was a TAI mentee in 2012. Her university experience was a smooth one, “My busy life from a young age helped me to be more confident in university. It was easy to make friends.”

The Trojan Academic Initiative (TAI) Student Peer Mentoring Programme helped her in this regard as well. “Having a mentor when I was at Rhodes made it easier for me to approach people within my industry to mentor me, and I now have about three young people that I am mentoring.”

Siki graduated from Rhodes University in 2016 with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Drama and Instrumental Musical Studies. Since then she has been one of the top three vocalists of *The Voice South Africa* season three in 2019.

“I would recommend the TAI Extended Studies programme to incoming students

at Rhodes, as this programme will prepare you to do better academically in your undergraduate period. You will have access to information that other students will not receive, because you will be under guidance”, shares Siki.

SURPRISE MATHEBULA

Reading towards Master of Science degree

Bridging the gap



WHEN SURPRISE MATHEBULA WAS a young girl she was certain of two things - she wished to enter the science industry, and she hoped to be as independent as possible. Joining Rhodes University in 2013 provided Surprise with an opportunity to accomplish both.

Born and raised in Soweto, Johannesburg, Surprise faced a life with challenges. Her high school experience, while fun, was also difficult at times. “My experience in high school was filled with the challenges any public school in a township would face, for example a shortage of teachers, and overcrowding of students per class”,

says the 26-year-old.

Surprise’s love of reading and her curiosity for the sciences resulted in her majoring in Ichthyology & Fisheries Science, as well as Entomology. She entered tertiary education hopeful for the future, however she experienced some discrimination in the form of racism and classism: “I had to keep on pushing forward and reminding myself that I can only work on me, I can’t control other people.”

Her time as part of the Trojan Academic Initiative (TAI) Student Peer Mentoring Programme alleviated some of these pressures by providing a safe space with like-minded people. Surprise describes the programme as a “bridge for an easier transition to tertiary life”.

Surprise also notes that as she completed her secondary education at a school which was not equipped with everything needed to fully explore the sciences, the Extended Studies Programme enabled her that exploration. Surprise appreciated having extra time to become comfortable with resources that she was experiencing for the first time in the university context.

Surprise graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 2016, followed by her Honours degree in 2017. She is currently working towards achieving her Masters in Science.

ZIYANDA NTANTISO

Personal Leadership Programme
Officer for the *Allan Gray Orbis Foundation*

Extending the impact of the TAI



ZIYANDA NTANTISO ATTENDED a high school which encouraged its learners to enter the Commerce industry. Ziyanda had no interest in anything of the sort. Rather, her father's occupation as a trade union official inspired her to apply to Rhodes University's Humanities Faculty, to study Industrial Sociology. In the Extended Humanities Programme, Ziyanda discovered a kind of academic guidance from her TAI mentor that she wishes all students outside the programme could also experience.

Hailing from East London in the Eastern Cape, Ziyanda chose Rhodes University owing to its location. By being close to home, Ziyanda had the comforts of family whilst experiencing the independence of university life.

With this freedom came challenges. "I faced the language barrier and a lack of confidence, particularly in the first year, as I came from a township school where everything was mainly taught in my home language. I could not participate in tutorial sessions [at Rhodes] as I was ashamed of my poor English."

The TAI Student Peer Mentoring Programme as well as the Extended Programme offered Ziyanda with space in which to overcome this challenge. By being a TAI mentee in 2009 and a mentor in 2010 and 2011, Ziyanda had regular opportunities to interact with people in English. "The programme also helped in terms of building networks and relationships outside the lecture hall," says Ziyanda.

Ziyanda believes that programmes such as the TAI should be also be offered to students outside the realms of the Extended Programme. "Mainstream students coming from [other] schools also need this support, as they are faced with so many challenges and could use a senior person who will give them guidance."

Today, Ziyanda works as a Personal Leadership Programme Officer for the *Allan Gray Orbis Foundation*. She assists students who have been funded by the Foundation, with academic and psychosocial matters. "This job requires mentorship skills as I meet with students on a quarterly basis to check on how they are doing, how far they are with their goals, and what challenges they are experiencing. TAI helped me a lot in preparing for this kind of job, as I still practise some of the skills learned there."

TAI Mentees

First year mentees are introduced to the TAI programme by their lecturers, who are also mentor facilitators, at the beginning of the academic year. First year students join a mentoring group as soon as possible thereafter. Facilitators endeavour to 'match' mentors with mentees as best they can so that students have a starting point in common. Facilitators utilise at least one of the following criteria in terms of matching students: same residence or hall, same mother tongue, same high school, home town, province, and/or gender.

Many often overwhelming transitional issues may be experienced by first year students, for example homesickness; being allocated to the Extended Studies programme; English medium instruction; the diversity of teaching and learning styles; as well as acclimatising to the culture of campus and residence life.

Through the TAI programme first year mentees are exposed to the challenges of their new environment in a supportive way, with an approach which seeks to demystify university culture. The mentor-mentee relationship and the relationship between mentees themselves, as well as support from Extended Studies lecturers, seek to enable a less onerous transition from school to university. This collaborative approach seeks to enable mentees to articulate and take responsibility for achieving their goals, in order for them to realise their full academic potential.

In response to the question "What does it mean to be in Extended Studies?" former first year Humanities Extended Studies TAI students reflect as follows:

"If Extended Studies did not exist I would not be here at Rhodes today."

"Being in the Extended Studies programme is a very great opportunity because some of us we are the first in our homes to be at university...there is no one [from home] who can help us through varsity life."

"One of the things that has really humbled me is the help that has been offered willingly by senior student [mentors] and our lecturers."

"For me being at Rhodes and in the Extended Studies means a lot. It means that I will be prepared for next year."

"Being on the Extended Studies Programme is very helpful in a way that we don't only acquire information and learning, we also build a relationship with our lecturers."



“Rhodes University for me [has been] challenging...if I was in the mainstream I was going to fail because all the basics that the university wants, I got them in Extended Studies.”

“To be in the ES is to have a good foundation. I feel that the other students who are on mainstream are missing out a lot. ES is very helpful, especially to students who come from disadvantaged high schools. ES helps people to fit in in the university.”

“Extended Studies has enabled me to get access to higher education.”

“I feel very privileged and honoured to be studying at Rhodes University and I am grateful that I have been accepted into the ES programme...not many people get this opportunity. I must say that after my first term at Rhodes I have never read and learnt so much and I never would have ever thought that I would be able to have such intellectual conversations with my friends about things that affect us for example...issues concerning race and gender etc.”

“Things at Extended Studies are simplified for us because there are times when I feel lost and confused in [mainstream] lectures. That [ES] programme it is really helpful especially when it comes to writing tutorials and assignments.”

The Judy Orpen Memorial Award

The Judy Orpen Memorial Award honours and celebrates the life and accomplishments of Ms Judy Orpen. The Award, generously made by Judy's family in her honour, aims to recognise young people with the same passion for living as Judy. Judy was working towards her Master's in Anthropology at Rhodes University when she passed away unexpectedly in late 2010.

Judy began her studies at Rhodes University in 2006, majoring in Anthropology and Linguistics. She attained her BA Honours in Anthropology in 2009. One of the requirements of her Honours degree was a piece of original research. Judy chose to do this research with students in Extended Studies, examining the way in which they experienced the University and the demands of academic study. Judy went on to teach in the Humanities Extended Programme as a leave replacement in the latter half of 2010.

MS LINDOKUHLE JAWA

Recipient of The Judy Orpen Memorial Award 2017

Lindokuhle Jawa, now 21, writes:

"I AM CURRENTLY PURSUING THE final year of my Bachelor of Arts degree at Rhodes University. The Extended Studies Programme helped me a lot in terms of transitioning from high school to university as this was a very big change in my life. The programme made it a bit easier to understand my courses, and I was also able to make friends. While

in the Extended Studies, I had a TAI mentor who also played a role in helping me navigate my way through my first year in university.

In 2018 I was awarded the 2017 Judy Orpen Memorial Award. This made it possible for me to pay a portion of my university fees. Being a recipient of this award taught me to have faith in myself and not to limit myself - because anything is possible. Through the Extended Studies Programme I was able to recognise my strengths and potential.

This all made it possible for me to want to be involved in other things that the institution has to offer, such as leadership positions like House Committee where I was the Community Engagement Representative for my residence in 2018. I also decided to take up tutoring academic computer literacy within the Extended Studies. My tutoring didn't just end with the Extended Studies because I also



tutored Journalism and Media studies in the Rhodes School of Journalism and Media Studies. This was a dream come true for me, because I got to share my passion with other people.

I decided that my work shouldn't just be at Rhodes, so in 2019 I took up mentoring at a Makhanda (Grahamstown) NGO, GADRA Education. I am currently a sub-warden at my residence Beit House and I am still a mentor at GADRA's matric school. What I value about being a mentor is that I get to share my experiences with other people. We can help each other grow not only in terms of academics, but in life generally. This relates to my time TAI experience in a lot of ways, because I can give back what was instilled in me when I was a mentee myself."

MS ZIMBINI SIKWEZA

Recipient of The Judy Orpen Memorial Award 2018

Zimbini writes:

MY NAME IS ZIMBINI AND I am originally from Mthatha, where I went to school. I have always been a dedicated person and a very enthusiastic and inquisitive child while growing, but my surroundings never allowed me to fully explore as I come from the most violent city in the Eastern Cape.

Rhodes created an environment where I could fully explore my inquisitive side. In grade one I had fully made up my mind that I wanted to be a lawyer. Thus occupying a space which has been predominantly occupied by man was one of the reasons I chose to pursue a law career. The main reason was that being born and raised in a patriarchal space and seeing the injustices that women faced around the continent drove me to this career.

Being in Extended Studies was truly a blessing as I fell in love with the Politics and Sociology; thus I decided to continue with the modules. Our ES lecturer Corrine Knowles is partly the reason I plan on graduating with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Politics, Industrial Sociology and Legal Theory. Having a TAI mentor in my first year helped me a lot as I was experiencing culture shock because of the new environment. She helped us in being able to adapt and also encouraged us to interact with people outside the classroom.

This year I am volunteering as an interpreter at the Law Clinic. As much as I am giving back it is also an opportunity for me to grow as a person and improve my



social skills, as I work with people most of the time. I am also the Head of House in my residence. Being nominated for this position meant a lot to me, as it meant that people saw that I would be suitable for the position. My goal for 2020 is to see myself grow and blossom in the things I am involved with, and to inspire those around me.

Being the recipient of the Judy Orpen Memorial Award meant a lot to me as it meant that the Orpen Family saw my hard work and rewarded me for my dedication. The Award helped me a lot as the funds contributed to my tuition material and my tuition fees. The Judy Orpen Memorial Award has helped so much in motivating me to work even harder and also to help those around me, as it encourages community engagement.



Evaluation

The TAI mentors' questionnaire has been developed by the TAI co-ordinator in collaboration with a CHERTL lecturer. This questionnaire is facilitated at the end of the first semester, so that student feedback can be critically reflected upon and integrated into planning of the following year's course.

Finances

Each TAI mentor receives a monthly stipend from February to May. In addition mentors are allocated a once-off R120 'outing' allowance, which they share with their mentees towards a group social activity of their choice. Faculty facilitators receive an annual honorarium in recognition of their valued contribution to the programme's work. Programme running costs vary from printing to stationery, and the like.

Expenditure 2018

Facilitator Honorariums	R 34 000.00
Mentor Stipends & Allowance	R 105 600.00
Programme Running Costs	R 39 503.68
TOTAL Programme Cost 2018 (excluding co-ordination)	R179 103.68

Expenditure 2019

Facilitator Honorariums	R 34 000.00
Mentor Stipends & Allowance	R 105 600.00
Programme Running Costs	R 23 933.26
TOTAL Programme Cost 2019 (excluding co-ordination)	R 163 533.26

Sponsors of the Trojan Academic Initiative

The Extended Studies TAI Student Peer Mentoring Programme extends its grateful thanks to the following donors, without whom the TAI's work would not be possible:

- The Department of Higher Education and Training: South Africa
- The Orpen Family





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