



Sweetness Mgobhozi



Lungi Ndlanzi



Ziyanda Ntlokwana



Muthumuni Managa



Nandipha Plaatjie



Nolovuyo Matiwane



Inga Nkone



Luyolo Speelman

TAI Extended Studies and Pharmacy



ALUMNI STORIES



Nokuthula Mnisi



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With sincere thanks to all donors who have contributed to the development of RU students through the TAI over the past two decades.

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Faculty of Science

Dr Muthumuni Managa

SENIOR LECTURER: The Institute for Nanotechnology and Water Sustainability (iNanoWS) at University of South Africa (UNISA)

Graduated from Rhodes University: 2019

Birthplace: HaRabali Village, Limpopo province

Currently lives in: Johannesburg, Gauteng

Highest qualification: PhD degree in Chemistry

What kinds of things did your TAI mentor and mentoring group help you with as a first-year student?

The TAI mentor and mentoring group helped me adapt and navigate university.

What was a highlight of mentoring for you?

The highlight of mentoring over two years was helping first year students navigate university in the same way I was helped. One of the most significant benefits of mentorship was the opportunity for my skills development.

What did you learn from being a TAI mentor which you have been able to use/apply in life beyond the University? Please explain.

As a mentor at Rhodes University, I had to develop the ability and willingness to: value the mentee as a person; develop mutual trust and respect; maintain confidentiality; listen both to what is being said and how it is being said; help the mentee to solve his or her own problems rather than give direction; focus on the mentee's development and resist the urge to produce a clone. All these above I still use beyond the University.

Describe your work and/or study history since graduating from Rhodes University.

I studied at Rhodes University up to PhD level then later joined UNISA as a Senior Lecturer. I am a member of MRSC, an Editorial Board member of Medicinal and Pharmaceutical Chemistry (specialty section of Frontiers in Chemistry) and a member of the Society of Porphyrins and Phthalocyanines (SPP). I received the University of Michigan African Presidential (UMAPS) Scholarship (2023) and was selected as one of the Mail & Guardian 200 Young South Africans (MG200Young) in the Science and Technology category in 2018. I have produced numerous publications (43) in renowned journals and have an h-index of 17 on Google Scholar.

What is your current job title?

Senior Lecturer at the Institute for Nanotechnology and Water Sustainability (iNanoWS)

“Mentoring can help you stay resilient and connected in the face of challenges.”

– Muthumuni Managa
(August 2023)



Please explain what you do.

Supervise postgraduate students; communicate ideas and results with members and teammates; review literature and analyse data; present research results at meetings and engage with results; publications; provide pastoral care and support to students; maintain own ongoing professional development; attend research seminars; research new articles at senior investigator's request; collaborate resources to complete research plans; carry out application experiments for global collaborations.

What do you love about your work?

I love students' development. It is such an amazing sight to watch students grow to be the best versions of themselves.

What is one of your central goals or aspirations and how do you plan to achieve this?

My goal is to one day be a prominent scientist and garner high visibility as a result of my highly regarded scientific contributions. This can only be done through hard work and never giving up, as my former PhD supervisor Distinguished Professor Tebello Nyokong says.

Please offer a word of advice or special message for the TAI mentors and mentees of 2023 on the occasion of our programme's 20-year anniversary.

Being a TAI mentor and mentee at Rhodes has improved my leadership and communication skills. I learnt new perspectives and ways of thinking; I have advanced my career and gain a great sense of personal satisfaction. Hence, I will always say that this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity; you are very fortunate to be part of this TAI programme.



Faculty of Pharmacy

Luyolo Speelman

PHARMACIST: Private retail pharmacy

Graduated from Rhodes University: 2020

Birthplace: Graaff-Reinet, Eastern Cape

Currently lives in: Queenstown Komani,
Eastern Cape

Highest qualification: Bachelor of Pharmacy

What kinds of things did your TAI mentor and mentoring group help you with, as a first-year student?

As a mentee I received guidance and motivational support on surviving tertiary living. I received different study techniques, study materials such as past papers and tutorials, and developed social relationships with peers in my faculty.

What was a highlight of TAI mentoring for you?

My highlight was seeing my mentee's progression throughout the semesters and being awarded the TAI Peer Mentoring NQF Level 5 Certificate.

What did you learn from being a TAI mentor which you have been able to use/apply in life beyond the University? Please explain.

One of the major things I learnt as a mentor was setting intentional goals, journalling those goals, and writing feedback on whether the goals were met or not. It has enabled me to apply this in my career whereby I set budget goals and review them on a weekly basis to ensure that the pharmacy is making a profit.

Describe your work and/or study history since graduating from Rhodes University.

After completing my BPharm degree I further did my internship at a private retail pharmacy for one year, and thereafter completed my community service at a rural public hospital. After completing my community service I was unemployed for three months. I started working as a Locum Pharmacist at Clicks Pharmacy for one month and I am now three months permanently employed at a private retail pharmacy.

What is your current job title?

Pharmacist

Please explain what you do.

I provide a high standard of pharmaceutical care and dispensary services in accordance with Good Pharmacy Practice as well as certain aspects related to stock and financial management of the pharmacy; dispense medication: capturing, picking, packing, and counselling; supervise pharmacist assistants and learners; handle in-store and telephone queries; opening and closing of pharmacy;

“May fear of the unknown of university life be eliminated by your presence as a mentor. Because we rise by lifting each other.”

— Luyolo Speelman
(September 2023)



build and maintain good professional relationships with other healthcare workers and relevant stakeholders; ensure and assist in stock management: including stock taking and cycle counts.

What do you love about your work?

I love being a custodian of medication and providing safe, effective, and cost-effective professional pharmaceutical services. I am passionate about ensuring that there is a constant availability of medication to our community. Being a catalyst in an individual's well-being and health is what I love most.

What is one of your central goals or aspirations and how do you plan to achieve this?

One of my central goals is one day owning multiple properties, one of them being an orphanage. With the money from my properties, I hope to have a study trust fund scholarship for students who come from impoverished backgrounds.

I plan to achieve this by reading books and attending seminars about properties, which I am currently doing. I am also living a minimalistic life and focusing on investing my salary which will hopefully allow me to buy my first property to rent.

Is there anything else which you would like to share?

The greatest sacrifice one can make is to walk an extra mile to help those who are vulnerable to new environments.



Faculty of Humanities

Nandipha Plaatjie

MULTIMEDIA REPORTER INTERN:

South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)

Graduated from Rhodes University: 2022

Birthplace: Kasouga Farm between Kenton-on-Sea and Port Alfred, Eastern Cape

Currently lives in: Port Elizabeth Gqeberha, Eastern Cape

Highest qualification: Bachelor of Arts

“We all need a helping hand when we embark on a new journey, and the TAI [mentoring] sessions are the perfect helping hand.”

– Nandipha Plaatjie
(August 2023)

What kinds of things did your TAI mentor and mentoring group help you with as a first-year student?

From my mentor I received help in fighting procrastination, which I previously suffered from in high school. The transition from high school to university was not an easy one, the workload and deadlines were much more intense. Being a procrastinator this was a challenge for me; my mentor helped me set up a study desk and formulate a diary, together with having a noticeboard with stickers of what I should prioritise. These techniques assisted me in always remembering what needs to be done first.

My TAI mentor also assisted me with understanding the various people that I met in varsity, especially the LGBTQI+ community. I learnt about the importance of not assuming gender and I learnt the differences between sexuality and gender. Where I come from, I only understood the terms lesbian and gay, however being part of the mentoring group made me understand that it is much broader than that.

For you, what was a highlight of TAI mentoring?

I enjoyed assisting first years to adapt to social life. Most first years had the mentality that university is an opportunity to be free without parents and go out as much as they wanted to. I had to explain to them that as much as it was all fun and more freedom, it was very important to be able to balance social life and academics. I also advised them on the importance of participating in social events such as the res braais, that would take some pressure of academics away from them and give them an opportunity to meet new people. It was very fulfilling to see them make friends and enjoying their weekends and being able to excel in academics as well.

What did you learn from being a TAI mentor and mentee which you have been able to use/apply in life beyond the University? Please explain.

From being a TAI mentee, I learnt about treading carefully when it comes to sexuality and gender. As a result, I am now very cautious when it comes to addressing people and ensure that I refrain from any offensive terms and conversations.

From being a mentor, I learnt how first year students struggle to



start conversations with people that they meet for the first time. I always ensure that when engaging with people who are meeting with me for the first time, I provide an ice breaker that will allow us to have a conversation effortlessly.

Describe your work and/or study history since graduating from Rhodes University.

I was employed as an education assistant after I graduated. This was an amazing journey as I enjoyed working with the kids.

What is your current job title?

I am currently working as a Multimedia Reporter Intern.

Please explain what you do.

I find stories that are newsworthy and pitch them to my editors. Once they are approved, I produce for TV and radio. I also work behind the scenes with camera work and video editing. When stories are scarce, I also do news reading for the SABC radio stations.

What do you love about your work?

I love getting out of the office and getting stories, I am not a person who enjoys sitting in the office all day. I also love being on TV, that has been my childhood dream.

What is one of your central goals or aspirations and how do you plan to achieve this?

My goal is to eventually become a news reader, I draw my inspiration from my colleague, Leanne Manas. I enrolled for Journalism and

Media Studies at Rhodes with the goal of becoming a news reader one day, and seeing myself one step closer to that is fulfilling. I plan on achieving this through showcasing the TV packages that I do; I need to show my managers at SABC that I am more than capable of doing anything that they ask to and convince them to keep me through being proactive.

Please offer a word of advice or special message for the TAI mentors and mentees of 2023 on the occasion of our programme's 20-year anniversary.

To the mentors: Pride yourself in supporting your mentees and always avail yourself to assist them. They may seem like they have everything under control, but when digging deep, you might find that they are struggling in some respects. In the end, it will be very fulfilling to see them adapt better and achieve their goals.

To the mentees: I know how tiring it is to be able to adapt to the time slots of the sessions sometimes. You may find that the venues to your sessions are a distance away and think twice before attending, but I assure you, those sessions will pave a way for you to enjoy your time at Rhodes University. We all need a helping hand when we embark on a new journey, and the TAI sessions are the perfect helping hand.

Is there anything else which you would like to share?

Happy 20th Anniversary to the TAI student peer mentoring programme. This programme has impacted the lives of people who are now adults and are able to use the skills that they learnt during the programme in the real world. Thank you.



Faculty of Humanities

Ziyanda Ntlokwana

PROJECT LIAISON OFFICER: The South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL)

FOUNDER: Ziyanda Research & Consulting Company

Graduated from Rhodes University: 2016

Birthplace: I was born and bred in Makhanda (a true product of the town if you will).

Currently lives in: I recently returned to Makhanda in April 2023.

Qualifications: Bachelor of Social Science and Masters Industrial Sociology

What kinds of things did your TAI mentor and mentoring group help you with as a first-year student?

So I was one of those first years who came to university straight out of high school and became pregnant. My mentor firstly created such a welcoming and safe space for us, I could openly talk about my emotions at the time without feeling judged. We were able to just come together and laugh about the adjustment from high school to university. Our weekly sessions made me feel like a 'normal' first year. I remember we would always make jokes about the shift from 300-word essays to suddenly 3000-word ones. Having a mentor who looked like me and spoke my language made it more believable when she would say "you guys will get used to this".

For you, what was a highlight of TAI mentoring?

One of the most exciting things for me was seeing the development of some of my mentee ladies. One of my mentees came into the sessions and she really did not enjoy talking and sharing. However, after a month she was the first to remind everyone about our sessions and to come up with ideas on what activities we could do. Seeing the ladies still maintain very close friendships beyond their first year was also amazing for me because it showed that we really did form a bond during our sessions. I remember when three of my mentees had to apply for honours, they requested a 'session' so we could discuss which options to go for, how to apply for funding and just everything related to postgrad. So it just became our thing when someone was thinking about a decision, I would almost always get a "Sisi session kaloku" text.

What did you learn from being a TAI mentor and mentee which you have been able to use/apply in life beyond the University? Please explain.

One thing I learnt as a mentee and mentor is that navigating uncomfortable and new spaces is always better when you find your circle to journey with. If I was a pregnant first year alone, I would not have enjoyed my 1st year in varsity as much as I did. Going to the weekly sessions just to laugh at how we got lost and got into the lecture hall a bit late.

I don't even think I would have been number one academically in my res during my 1st year, had it not been for mentoring. Because I had my circle where we unpacked all the uncomfortable parts of

“Having a mentor in my first year who looked like me and spoke my language made it more believable when she would say, ‘you guys will get used to this’”.

— Ziyanda Ntlokwana
(September 2023)



1st year it made me realise it's not that bad. I have truly come to appreciate the value of having a circle that is my safe space.

I think the amazing experience I had with my mentor allowed me to have such an amazing first year experience, and this highlighted the importance of having a support system. If I think about it, my mentoring experience is at the root of my passion for helping to support young people in their academic journeys. In my 2nd year I got involved with GADRA Education, where I tutored and mentored matric students and later served as a board member. My one take away from being both a TAI mentor and mentee is that we all operate at our optimal best when we are surrounded by a support structure.

Describe your work and/or study history since graduating from Rhodes University.

I unofficially left RU in 2021, I say "unofficially" because I put my PhD studies on hold to go work. So since leaving RU in 2021, I went to work as a researcher in East London at the Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council where I published a working paper on 4IR and its implications for the world of work. I also have a research consultancy company, Ziyanda Research & Consulting, where I help postgraduate students navigate the research journey. Again, with my company, the idea behind it is that the postgraduate journey is not as difficult when one has a support structure to help guide and share ideas with. I believe academia is truly so much easier when one is just able to brainstorm ideas and share frustrations with others.

What is your current job title?

Project Liaison Officer

Please explain what you do.

In simple terms, I act as the link between the project management team and community stakeholders. I further ensure that workers are recruited from the specified target area and are treated well once employed.

What do you love about your work?

The reason why I furthered my studies in Industrial Sociology was my interest in labour-related issues: understanding what shapes workplace dynamics and how workers are treated in their respective professions. My current work allows me to not only

recruit workers but to ensure that they are not exploited in any manner. Furthermore, since the project I am working on is based in Makhanda and Peddie, for me it is amazing because I get to recruit and thus aid in the development of young people from my hometown. It is the perfect mix of my professional interest in labour as well as my personal drive of development for my hometown.

What is one of your central goals or aspirations and how do you plan to achieve this?

I love working with people and making a positive impact in whatever I do. My one goal in life is to establish myself as one of the key voices when it comes to research on labour issues. While I have started publishing in this area I do want to go back and finish my PhD, not only for myself, but most importantly to tell the stories of the participants with whom I have been working.

Please offer a word of advice or special message for the TAI mentors and mentees of 2023 on the occasion of our programme's 20-year anniversary.

The TAI programme allows both mentors and mentees to create sisterhoods/brotherhoods that make varsity so much more fun. So, enjoy the experience, allow yourself to discover other approaches to navigating varsity through the mentoring sessions. I believe when you embrace the sessions, it enriches both your social as well as your academic life.

Is there anything else which you would like to share?

For me, I was able to structure the subjects I would take in 2nd and 3rd year because of the conversations we would have in our mentoring sessions. Our mentor would really come up with different options for us to consider, and this opened my mind. So, the mentoring sessions in my 1st year truly helped shape my academic journey. I will forever appreciate the person I had as a mentor, as well as my fellow mentees.

I remember when I was about to start my Masters in 2015, I think, it was January, and I didn't have funding. I remember I met with my first-year lecturer. I told him about my predicament and he said he would see what could be done. I later received a bursary that allowed me to complete my MA. I will be forever grateful to the TAI programme for providing me with a holistic support system that allowed me to thrive beyond just my first year.



Faculty of Commerce

Inga Nkone

E-COMMERCE SALES SPECIALIST:

Jaguar Land Rover South Africa

Graduated from Rhodes University: 2015

Birthplace: Lusikisiki, Eastern Cape

Currently lives in: Midrand, Gauteng

Qualifications: BCom Information Systems and Economics and PG Diploma in Business Administration

“Congratulations on this massive milestone: May the TAI programme continue to be a support structure for many students out there. I am a living testimony of the benefits that come with the programme. Happy 20th Anniversary!”

– Inga Nkone (August 2023)

What kinds of things did your TAI mentor and mentoring group help you with as a first-year student?

Adjusting to university life and the pressure that comes with it; Guidance on adjusting to life outside of the home environment and staying around people I was not familiar with; Guidance on effectively studying and managing my time; Guidance on stretching my pocket money: as a student you need to learn to make your money go further; Guidance on identifying university employment opportunities while studying.

For you, what was a highlight of being a mentor?

Shaping mentees to see their own potential and helping mentees to see that their dreams are valid and achievable.

What did you learn from being a TAI mentee which you have been able to use/apply in life beyond the University? Please explain.

Staying true to yourself, being your authentic self encourages you to grow and explore things that are out of your comfort zone. We only truly learn and grow when we are out of our comfort zone. Don't be afraid to ask questions, and to listen to receive – not listen to respond.

Describe your work and/or study history since graduating from Rhodes University.

In terms of study, I completed a PDBA (Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration) at the Wits Business School. With regard to my career I have worked at Audi South Africa as a Graduate Trainee: Supply Chain Analyst. My key achievement here is that I was awarded the VWSA Graduate Trainee of the Year. I worked at Audi South Africa as a Dealer Sales Analyst and at the BMW Group South Africa in the capacity of Specialist Market Analyst; Area Sales Manager: SSA (Sub-Saharan Africa). I was Project lead for the successful relocation of X3 production for SSA, from USA to Plant Rosslyn South Africa.

What is your current job title?

E-Commerce Sales Specialist

Please explain what you do.

In a nutshell: I am responsible for the strategic direction for



E-Commerce as a growth channel to achieve the assigned financial targets. I am also responsible for driving the development of analytical and quantitative insights to boost E-Commerce platforms. I generate competitive and business intelligence processes to ensure the accuracy of data and track competitors' activities.

What do you love about your work?

- I love interacting and engaging with different people from different departments, it's always interesting to learn the views of other people and using that to add to what you know.
- Building reports from the different data-sets and ultimately using this input to create a more insightful picture for better decision making.
- Working to find solutions to different problems.

What is one of your central goals or aspirations and how do you plan to achieve this?

Ultimately, I'd love to be a property developer and have my own portfolio of properties. This is one of the major reasons why I enrolled at Wits Business School, to hone-in on my entrepreneurial aspirations.

Please offer a word of advice or special message for the TAI mentors and mentees of 2023 on the occasion of our programme's 20-year anniversary.

Dream big dreams and put in the work to achieve them. Anything is always possible, if you are your own biggest fan and you take the steps to get there. Always remember that dreams delayed are not dreams denied.



Faculty of Commerce

Lungisile Favourite Ndlanzi

AUDIT SENIOR: The Auditor General of South Africa

Graduated from Rhodes University: 2016

Birthplace: Dundee, KwaZulu Natal

Currently lives in: East London, Eastern Cape

Qualifications: Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting, Advanced Diploma in Accounting, PG Diploma in Accounting, SAICA 3-year articles

“Mentees and mentors of 2023, you are part of the special TAI family. You’ll look back to this year and remember that you were part of history in the making.”

– Lungi Ndlanzi (September 2023)

What kinds of things did your TAI mentor and mentoring group help you with as a first-year student?

Settling into the new academic university environment and how to approach our studies.

For you, what was a highlight of being a TAI mentor?

It was learning and growing through the experience, my mentees were vulnerable with me. I learned to open up as well. It felt like a safe space for us all. Our last session was filled with emotions as we reflected how the first session was rigid but as we met, we learned to trust each other.

What did you learn from being a TAI mentee and mentor which you have been able to use/apply in life beyond the University? Please explain.

Those weekly mentee sessions helped “check-in” with how we were settling into university, especially academically and at res. In terms of being a mentor there’s always room for growth in life, especially when you allow yourself to be vulnerable.

Describe your work and/or study history since graduating from Rhodes University.

I furthered my studies at Fort Hare University and obtained an Advanced Diploma in Accounting. I also obtained my Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting from the University of South Africa. I completed my SAICA 3-year articles at the Auditor General of South Africa, at the East London Business Unit.

What is your current job title?

Audit Senior at the Auditor General of South Africa.

Please explain what you do.

Audit the public sector (municipalities, government departments etc).

What do you love about your work?

We build public confidence by holding accountable those in charge of the public purse.



What is one of your central goals or aspirations and how do you plan to achieve this?

To have an education foundation that will fund learners from primary school to Grade 12 and assist them to obtain funding for tertiary studies. To partner with stakeholders that share the same educational vision that I have, to improve the South African situation.

Please offer a word of advice or special message for the TAI mentors and mentees of 2023 on the occasion of our programme's 20-year anniversary.

You are part of the special TAI family; you'll look back to this year and remember you were part of history in the making :)

Is there anything else which you would like to share?

Never stop believing in the beauty of your dreams, life is a journey. Enjoy it.



Faculty of Pharmacy

Phindile Sweetness Mgobhozi

COMMUNITY SERVICE

PHARMACIST: St Margaret's Community Healthcare Centre

Graduated from Rhodes University: 2020

Birthplace: Durban, Umkomaas, KwaZulu-Natal

Currently lives in: Umzimkhulu, Clydesdale, KwaZulu-Natal

Qualifications: Bachelor of Pharmacy

What kinds of things did your TAI mentor and mentoring group help you with as a first-year student?

Navigating university life, dedicating myself to coursework and general wellbeing.

For you, what was a highlight of being a TAI mentor?

Being able to witness growth of my mentees and seeing them gradually get comfortable with me as their mentor and with each other.

What did you learn from being a TAI mentor which you have been able to use/apply in life beyond the University? Please explain.

Discipline and dedication go hand-in-hand, and having a specific routine helps to keep your life balanced and organised.

Describe your work and/or study history since graduating from Rhodes University.

I did my internship in 2021 and took a gap year in 2022.

What is your current job title?

Community service pharmacist

Please explain what you do.

My main duties are to interpret prescriptions, compile medication, and dispense to patients.

What do you love about your work?

Helping patients, alleviating diseases, and being a custodian of medicine.

What is one of your central goals or aspirations and how do you plan to achieve this?

Working as a pharmacist abroad. I plan on working for a few years in South Africa to gain the necessary experience and then apply abroad for work opportunities.

“Mentorship is a mutually beneficial relationship. It is a fulfilling and rewarding journey.”

– Sweetness Mgobhozi
(August 2023)



Please offer a word of advice or special message for the TAI mentors and mentees of 2023 on the occasion of our programme's 20-year anniversary.

A word of advice to mentors and mentees of 2023 would be to be patient with each other. Give each other time to adjust and be comfortable. Mentorship is a mutually beneficial relationship. It is a fulfilling and rewarding journey.



Faculty of Science

Noluvuyo (Vuyo) Matiwane

SCIENCE LECTURER: Rhodes University

Graduated from Rhodes University: 2016

Birthplace: Tzaneen, Limpopo

Currently lives in: Makhanda, Eastern Cape

Highest qualification: BSc Hons (MSc in process)

What kinds of things did your TAI mentor and mentoring group help you with as a first-year student?

Transitioning to university socially and academically.

What did you learn from being a TAI mentee which you have been able to use/apply in life *beyond* the University? Please explain.

Sometimes you just have to get a different perspective, and talking helps.

Some situations seem to have no solution because we may be overthinking things. Talking to someone allows you to look at a problem from a different angle, and exposes the bits that were not apparent when you were thinking about it on your own.

Describe your work and/or study history at Rhodes University.

I am counting 10 (+) years at Rhodes University.

What is your current job title?

Lecturer

Please explain what you do.

I teach Science for Extended Studies.

What do you love about your work?

From sitting at one of the desks in Steve Biko Union seminar room 1 (2012) to standing in the front of the class - a coach, bigger (technically, I'm still the same size), and more experienced - it's a privilege.

I get to equip and enable more young scientists; nothing is more amazing than that!

Please add a word of advice or a special message for the TAI mentors and mentees of 2023 on the occasion of our programme's 20-year anniversary.

Mentee: Show yourself to find the best coach.

Mentor: I can only imagine that being a mentor can be mentally and/or emotionally taxing at times and that sometimes you feel 'triggered'. Remember that not all responses have to be in words.

“I get to equip and enable more young scientists; nothing is more amazing than that!”

– Vuyo Matiwane
(September 2023)



Faculty of Commerce

Nokuthula Mnisi

FINANCIAL ANALYST: Financial Planning & Analysis at Averg Moolman

Graduated from Rhodes University: 2015

Birthplace: Tzaneen, Limpopo

Currently lives in: Johannesburg, Gauteng

Qualifications: BCom Accounting, CTA, CA(SA)

“My aim is to use my profession to season upcoming Chartered Accountants through programmes like the TAI, but more especially for young professionals to become better leaders who possess integrity and humility.”

– Nokuthula Mnisi (September 2023)

What kinds of things did your TAI mentor and mentoring group help you with as a first-year student?

Students navigating shared experiences.

What did you learn from mentoring? Please explain.

Mentoring has definitely been the most rewarding and enriching experience. From it I learned that the delicate balance of mentoring someone is really not creating them in your own image or having them follow your footsteps, but giving them the opportunity to be great themselves. As a mentor I have found that it has always been a way of exercising my “why” by throwing in little torches here and there and leading those who journey after me through the dark so they see the hope inside of them, I believe in the ability to encourage and lead someone through a successful university/ career experience.

What did you learn from being a TAI mentee and mentor which you have been able to use/apply in life beyond the University? Please explain.

Going into University- and if you are like me, in a different province - is a whole new experience: from meeting people from different cultures, to social class and beliefs, to one’s personal independence and taking ownership of your development. Adaptation is key. As a mentee I loved that it encouraged learning through shared experiences, both common and totally unrelated. It allowed me to seek advice and help others, to be selfless.

When I became a mentor I wanted to ensure that my mentees saw the fruits of mentorship. I understood I was not there to teach but to learn from their various experiences and offer support as best as I could. I still do this in my workspaces to date. The whole TAI experience has helped me to cultivate interpersonal, communication, and leadership skills.

Please briefly describe your work and/or study history since graduating from Rhodes University.

I studied my Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Accounting Sciences (CTA) at UNISA- 2016, I then proceeded to do my Articles in the audit space with PwC (2017-2019) and qualified as a Chartered Accountant. In 2020 I worked as a Reporting Analyst at Aspen Pharmacare, and then a Financial Accountant at Tiger Brands.



What is your current job title?

Financial Analyst: Financial Planning & Analysis, in the mining industry.

Please explain what you do.

My experience includes leading the development and maintenance of financial models to forecast revenue, expenses, and profitability, as well as providing insights on key financial and operational metrics to support decision-making at the executive level. It entails preparing financial analysis aimed at understanding the current and expected performance of the company, to support the timely and accurate financial and management reporting processes. This includes preparing annual financial statements; annual budgeting processes and forecasts; producing management accounts; statutory compliance; supporting external auditors; preparing tax submissions; and reviewing/releasing of payments. This role includes financial control, project finance, and team management which is the management of various mine sites, to develop and maintain monthly management reports, annual budgets and forecasts, together with the financial managers on site.

What do you love about your work?

I love that my job is a combination of hard skills and soft skills. It allows me to be a problem-solver and exercise my communication and interpersonal skills. My job allows me to apply my analytical and problem-solving skills by offering my input on projects, budget meetings or preparing financial reports. It forces me to stay updated on current news and market trends as well as changes in finance rates like interest rates, to contribute information to team brainstorming sessions and decisions on financial topics. Beyond my technical expertise I am passionate about development and people, so it allows me to develop my leadership and collaboration skills.

What is one of your central goals/aspirations, and how do you plan to achieve this?

I am very passionate about mentorship and developing people both personally and professionally. My aim is to use my profession to season the upcoming CA's (our future leaders) through programmes like the TAI but more especially for young professionals to become better leaders who possess integrity and humility.

Please add a word of advice or a special message for the TAI mentors and mentees of 2023 on the occasion of our programme's 20-year anniversary.

I know full well that the TAI Extended Studies programme often has a stigma- as being for people who weren't 'cut out' for mainstream. Over the years I have seen how it made people feel 'less' than those that were accepted into the 3-year programme. However, choose a different view. Write your own story, with a destination that only YOU know. My hope is that you will all take pride in your journey because if anything, being in Extended Studies does not mean you are incapable, it means you take your future seriously and are unafraid to seek the necessary aid to lead you through a successful university experience. I can only hope that more and more people will appreciate the fact that this one year is worth it, if it gets you closer to your dreams.

I chose to appreciate the support I had in the programme - the lecturers were amazing. This made the whole experience even better, but it always begins in the mind. It begins with how you view your journey. I understood that "to each their own journey" and I already knew from there, that I would have a successful story to share.

Is there anything else which you would like to share?

Thank you so much for inviting participation in this Q&A towards a special commemorative TAI E-publication.



2003 – 2023

Learning Guidance Commitment Collaboration Accomplishment
Responsibility Fulfilment Honesty Tolerance Challenge Resilience
Tenacity Balance Trust Thought Action Growth Inspiration

Celebrating 20 Years Of Mentoring Excellence at Rhodes