Tshwane University of Technology

We empower people

Faculty of Management Sciences

FACULTY IN THE **NEWS**

2025

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Message from the Executive Dean

Faculty of Management Sciences, where future leaders are launched

Reflecting on 2025, the Faculty of Management Sciences celebrates a year defined by academic excellence, innovation and meaningful impact. As one of the largest and most dynamic faculties at TUT, we proudly continue to serve thousands of undergraduate and postgraduate students across the Pretoria, Polokwane, eMalahleni and Mbombela campuses.

This year marked significant progress in our journey from good to great. Our departments delivered high-quality teaching and learning, research outputs increased, while our graduates continued to distinguish themselves as capable, ethical and industry-ready professionals. Through strong partnerships, community engagement and responsive curriculum offerings, the Faculty remains a trusted contributor to South Africa's socio-economic development.

The Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED)'s growing influence in business, higher education and society has been a particular highlight for 2025. By providing entrepreneurial training, mentorship, business incubation support and inclusion-focused programmes for women, youth and persons with disabilities, the Centre is strengthening pathways for small-business development and meaningful economic participation. The work done at the CED directly supports TUT's new and ambitious vision to become South Africa's leading entrepreneurial university in the years ahead.

Since 2024, we have expanded our fully online, asynchronous offerings, enabling students to pursue Higher Certificates, Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas, Postgraduate Diplomas and structured Master's programmes with four to six intakes per year. This approach ensures learning that is flexible, accessible and of the highest quality, meeting students where they are and supporting their success.

Central to our mission, is our focus on cultivating future leadership. Through practical learning, innovation-driven projects and a commitment to excellence, we prepare future-ready students who can thrive in a rapidly changing world of work. The Faculty's achievements in 2025 reflect the dedication of our staff, the resilience of our students and the collaborative strength of our industry partnerships.

As we look ahead, the Faculty of Management Sciences remains committed to shaping leaders, transforming communities and driving meaningful impact — today and for generations to come.

Dr Edgar Nesamvuni
Executive Dean

SACIA welcomes TUT students as young professionals

A group of Diploma in Event Management students from the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) who passed the qualifying Southern African Communications Industries Association (SACIA) / Council of Events Professionals Africa (CEPA) exam, were inducted as members of SACIA's Young Professionals Forum, during Meetings Africa 2025 in February.

"This membership serves as an entry-level designation into the events industry and is an excellent achievement for and contribution from our students," says Dr Lisa Welthagen, senior lecturer at the Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Management Sciences.

The Southern African Communications Industries Association (SACIA} is a SAQA recognised professional body, actively involved in the entertainment and communication industry across Southern Africa. It is specifically designed to promote the adoption of professional standards and ethical business practices while furthering its members' interests through partnerships and representation on various issues.

CEPA, a special interest group of SACIA, aims to professionalise the African event management industry by establishing recognised competency standards, providing professional development opportunities, and promoting ethical practices. This is achieved by developing and implementing certified event professional designations and advancing networking and collaboration among event professionals.

In 2024, Dr Welthagen introduced this first-class initiative, which is expected to continue evolving, with SACIA.

Students received their membership certificates at Meetings Africa 2025 in February, in the presence of Patricia de Lille, Minister of Tourism, Executive Director of SACIA, Kevan Jones and Sthembiso Dlamini, CEO of the Gauteng Tourism Authority.

Head of Department receives a special award

Dr Patrick Ebewo, Head of the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship as well as the Head of the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development, received the South African Institute of Professional Accountants (SAIPA) Partner Award for Individual Contribution. Dr Ebewo has been honoured as the sole recipient of the SAIPA Partner Award: Individual Contribution at the SAIPA Mastery Circle Awards.

This prestigious recognition highlights his dedication to shaping the future of accounting, business advisory, and entrepreneurship.

His contributions extend beyond personal achievements - they are about sharing knowledge, mentoring professionals and driving transformation across industries. This award is a testament to the power of strategic thinking, innovation and a deep commitment to professional excellence.

Thanking SAIPA, the selection committee, and his esteemed peers for this recognition, Dr Ebewo acknowledged the collective effort of those who continue to push boundaries and redefine what's possible in the profession. "

"Together, we are building a future where impact, collaboration and leadership drive meaningful change," he said.

Faculty celebrates excellence in style

It was a night of glitz and glam when the Faculty of Management Sciences acknowledged, recognised and rewarded hard work and outstanding academic research achievements in research, teaching and learning during their annual Excellence Awards held recently at the Marriott Hotel in Menlyn.

Opening and welcoming the guests, Dr Rosa NaudePotgieter, Sectional Head of the Department of Tourism, said excellence is never accidental – it is a result of persistent, passionate effort.

"Excellence is not a moment but a habit; it is your commitment to refine, to push boundaries and never settle for less. We are convened here to celebrate the excellence of those who continuously shape brilliance in themselves and others and never cease until they give their very best," she added.

The Executive Dean of the Faculty, Dr Edgar Nesamvuni, announced that the event, going forward, will be held every year. "During our strategic planning session, it was raised that we do not celebrate ourselves enough. Tonight, we celebrate our achievements with awards reflecting our successes in 2022 based on the audited research outputs for 2022, while teacher awards reflect our 2023 successes," he said.

Addressing the entire audience as leaders in their respective fields, guest speaker Joe Mudau, Managing Director at Redifine Brands Group, said leadership is not a position, it is an influence. It is not a one-off thing but it requires a lot of discipline.

"As leaders, you have to be persistent in everything you do. A small discipline repeated daily with consistency will lead to greater achievement, gained slowly over time. Thus, excellent people do not celebrate mediocracy - they have a clear vision and purpose," he added.

During the awards ceremony, the highlight was Prof Cecile Schutz from the Department of People Management and Development scooping three awards in the categories: Senior Researcher of the Year 2022, Women Researcher of the Year 2022, as well as Recognition of outstanding supervision of Postgraduate students in 2023. She was followed by Dr Portia Sifolo from the Department of Tourism Management, who scooped two awards in the categories Junior Researcher of the Year 2022 and Women Researcher of the Year (Runner-up) of the Year 2022.

Other award winners were:

- **Dr Therese Roux** from the Department of Marketing, Supply Chain and Sport Management - Senior Researcher of the Year Runner-up) 2022;
- **Dr Sharon Makaleng** (Department of Marketing, Supply Chain and Sport Management) - Junior Researcher of the Year (Runner-up) 2022;
- **Ms Miguel Otto** (Masters of Management Sciences in Organisational Leadership) - Dean's award for Best Master's Student in the Faculty 2023;
- **Mr T P Sethakha** (Doctor in Business Administration Tshwane School of Business and Society) - Dean's award for Best Doctorate Student in the Faculty 2023;
- **Dr Sfiso Goodman** (Department of Marketing, Supply Chain and Sport Management) - Staff improvement qualification 2023 (Obtaining Doctorate qualification);
- **Dr Beverly Ntshabeleng** (Department of Tourism Management) - Staff improvement qualification 2023 (Obtaining a Doctorate qualification);
- **Prof Vinessa Naidoo** (Tshwane School of Business and Society) - Recognition of outstanding supervision of Postgraduate students 2023 (Runner-up).

Lecturers of the Year in the Faculty for 2023 went to:

DEPARTMENT	AWARD
Department of Business and Information Management Services	**Ms MB le Clus** Lecturer of the Year 2023 **Dr G Maake** (Runner-up) Lecturer of the Year 2023
Department of Hospitality Management	**Prof JR Roberson** Lecturer of the Year 2023 **Dr A Roeloffze** (Runner-up) Lecturer of the Year 2023
Department Management and Entrepreneurship	**Ms Y Smit** Lecturer of the Year 2023
Polokwane Campus	**Dr MJ Malebana** Lecturer of the Year 2023 **Mr PP Maribe** (Runner-up) Lecturer of the Year 2023

Proud award winners at the Faculty of Management Sciences Academic Excellence Awards for 2022/2023.

Joe Mudau, Managing Director of Redefine Brands Group, talking about leadership and excellence during the awards ceremony.

UN conference highlights TUT women empowerment programme

While advances in technology make it possible for women to start their own businesses, drive innovation and access global markets - digital literacy, access to devices and data sources, as well as funding, remain a barrier for many to access opportunities.

These were some of the challenges that brought together representatives from governments, academic institutions and civil society at a side event at the 69th UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) held at the UN Headquarters in New York, in the USA.

The Tshwane University of Technology {TUT) - that attended the CSW69 as part of the South African delegation led by the Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Sindisiwe Chikunga - was represented by Dr Vathiswa Papu-Zamxaka, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Engagement.

The side event, hosted on 12 March 2025 by the Republic of Türkiye, aimed to highlight the role of women in digital entrepreneurship and discuss policy recommendations to increase opportunities in the digital economy for women.

Speaking at the gathering themed "Digital Trends: Women Entrepreneurs Shaping the Future of the Economy', Dr Papu-Zamxaka said policies that promote inclusion, ensuring equitable resource access and safeguarding women against technologyrelated gender-based violence, are required to support their participation in digital entrepreneurship.

"Businesses led by women attract under 3% of venture capital and many operate informally without proper support. This issue requires urgent attention," she said.

She mentioned research that shows women's participation in the economy boosting GDP, reducing poverty and stabilising societies.

"Women reinvest up to 90% of their income into families compared to 30%-40% of men. Empowering women entrepreneurs transforms lives and uplifts generations," she said.

In 2025, the CSW69 focused on the progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, adopted 30 years ago by 189 countries, is considered the global agenda for empowering girls and women and for achieving gender equality.

Dr Papu-Zamxaka said that, without targeted investments in digital literacy and cybersecurity, the opportunities in the digital economy will remain out of reach for many women.

She applauded the South African government for investing in the establishment of centres of entrepreneurship in academic institutions across the country. She remarked that academic institutions such TUT, through its Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED), play a crucial role in equipping women with digital skills, business acumen and market access to thrive in the digital economy.

She said TUT's CED, through initiatives such as the Women Entrepreneurship Contractor Capacity Development Programme - conducted in collaboration with UN Women - have empowered women in several male-dominated industries such as construction.

As South Africa prepares for the 2025 G20 Summit, we are leading efforts in women's financial inclusion and entrepreneurship. The Conference on Financial Inclusion and Women Empowerment, led by our government through the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities and co-hosted by TUT will address systemic financial and empowerment barriers women face," she indicated.

The Conference on Financial Inclusion and Women Empowerment themed "Advancing Financial Inclusion, Entrepreneurship and Gender Equity' was held on 6 and 7 May 2025 at Sun City, North-West Province, South Africa.

Dr Papu-Zamxaka called on financial institutions, governments and the private sector to enhance capital access for women-led enterprises.

"Despite evidence of their resilience and social impact, women entrepreneurs are still underfunded," she said.

"We must address policy gaps hindering women's participation in high-growth industries. Gender-responsive procurement, protection against digital harassment and frameworks supporting women's asset ownership are essential for fostering sustainable entrepreneurship."

New journal boosts Africa-centred sustainable tourism research

The African Journal of Sustainable Tourism (AJST), a pioneering academic journal committed to advancing knowledge and innovation in sustainable tourism across the African continent has just been launched.

According to Prof Uwe Hermann from the Tshwane University of Technology's Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Management, and Editor-in-Chief of the AJST the journal will be a critical platform for scholars, practitioners and policymakers to share original, peer-reviewed research promoting responsible and inclusive tourism practices on the continent and in other developing countries.

The journal's vision is Afrocentric, aiming to address the unique socio-cultural, economic and environmental dynamics that shape tourism development in the region while also contributing to the achievement of the United National Sustainable Development Goals and beyond.

"Tourism is a powerful catalyst for sustainable development, but its potential in Africa remains underexplored. This journal is dedicated to showcasing African scholarship, amplifying local voices and fostering a dialogue that can drive real change in the industry," said Prof Hermann.

AOSIS, a reputable academic publisher in South Africa, publishes the AJST.

For more information or to submit a manuscript, visit www.ajstjournal.org

Prof Uwe Hermann, Editor-in-Chief of the AJST

Thousand plus learners delight in tourism career opportunities at career fair

The onset of the South African winter is also that time of the year when thousands of learners have to decide what to do with their futures and apply for study at a higher education institution. Making these choices a bit easier, academics from the Tshwane University of Technology's (TUT) Department of Tourism Management made a significant impact at the UNISA Community Career Fair held at Seabe High School at the beginning of May. Not only did they inform, but they also inspired more than 1 200 Grade 11 and 12 learners to consider careers in tourism and hospitality.

Led by the Department's Dr Madiseng Phori and Malefane Monyane, with the support of the Faculty of Management Sciences' Senior Faculty Marketer, Suzette Landman, the TUT team showcased diverse career pathways through interactive exhibitions and presentations, which included Tourism Management, Events Management, as well as Casino and Resorts Management.

Key highlights during the Community Fair included fun activities and positive interaction with learners who demonstrated keen interest in TUT's programmes, particularly the work-integrated learning opportunities.

The team also supplied comprehensive information and brochures from TUT's Information Centre for their further use and reference.

In addition to motivating and inspiring the learners, the event contributed to strengthening ties with the educators and UNISA representatives with a view to future collaborations.

"This fair was a golden opportunity to ignite passion for tourism in rural youth. Many learners were surprised by the breadth of careers our industry offers," said the team.

A thousand plus learners attended the UNISA Community Career Fair, held at Seabe High School

TUT celebrates three new PhD trendsetters in Business Administration

Great things come in threes and three exceptional scholars in Business Administration have proved this during the Tshwane University of Technology's Autumn graduations. The trio has all received their Doctoral Degrees in Business Administration.

Underpinning economic growth, job creation, innovation and ultimately improving the quality of life for everyone, Business Administration is crucial to society. Drs Paulos Mpye, Mmotlana Mokonyane and Melvin Mothoa's interest in exploring, among others, the frameworks it provides for businesses to operate efficiently, create goods and services and contribute to a thriving economy, prompted their PhD studies.

Their hard work, brilliance and commitment to excellence certainly set the scene for a brighter future and contributing to improving society and industry.

Congratulations to them and may the sky be their limit in future!

The trio: Dr Paulos Motampe Mpye, Dr Mmotlana Joseph Mokonyane and Dr Melvin Sello Mothoa

TUT confers Doctoral degrees on two Organisational Leadership experts

The Tshwane University of Technology's (TUT), newly capped experts in Organisational Leadership, Drs Lametse Nono Letsebe and Neo Titus Lekutle, received their Doctoral Degrees in Management Sciences during TUT's 2025 Autumn Graduations. Their pioneering research has been showcased at prestigious international conferences, which recognise learning on a global stage.

Dr Letsebe's research explored innovative approaches to leadership dynamics in modern organisations, offering insights into fostering resilience and adaptability in complex environments. Dr Lekutle focused on strategies for enhancing organisational effectiveness through transformative leadership, providing practical frameworks for sustainable growth. Their work not only contributes to the academic field but also offers actionable solutions for real-world organisational challenges.

TUT's Faculty of Management Sciences commended both scholars for their dedication, rigorous research and commitment to pushing boundaries. "Drs Letsebe and Lekutle have set an exemplary standard, inspiring future leaders and researchers within our institution and beyond," said the Executive Dean of the Faculty, Dr Edgar Nesamvuni.

This milestone reflects TUT's mission to nurture forward-thinking professionals who drive innovation and societal impact. The University community celebrates their achievements, which demonstrate their academic excellence.

Congratulations Dr Letsebe and Dr Lekutle, for raising the bar and inspiring the #Classof2025

Collaborative lecture explores future of work in age of AI

The Tshwane University of Technology's Department of Business and Information Management and Services welcomed esteemed international speaker Dr Alfonso Montero for a thought-provoking lecture on The Future of Work in the Age of AI.

The session focused on the intersection of artificial intelligence, leadership and systems thinking as well as how these forces are reshaping organisational structures and redefining human roles.

Dr Montero is a distinguished scholar-practitioner whose work centres on leadership, systems thinking and AI. His research explores emerging areas, including posthumanism, the integration of human and artificial intelligence, and the systemic transformations that are reshaping the nature of work and leadership in the digital age. Deeply committed to preparing future leaders for the complexities of an AI-driven world, Dr Montero brings both academic rigour and practical insight to these pressing topics.

He recently completed two seminal works: Systems Thinking in the Age of AI and Shaping the Future of Leadership in AI-Driven Workplaces: A Systems Thinking Approach. These publications critically examine the evolving role of leadership amid rapid technological advancements.

With extensive teaching experience at both master's and doctoral levels, Dr Montero has advised scholar-practitioners focused on leadership transformation, social justice and adaptive systems. His influence extends beyond academia through leadership training for executives at Boeing, as well as engagements with non-profit organisations and government agencies across the globe.

Dr Montero's global footprint includes training programmes for international NGOs and government entities in countries such as Ukraine and Morocco. He also contributes to ongoing discourse on global AI policy and ethics through his involvement with the World Affairs division of the Commonwealth Club.

Based in the San Francisco Bay Area - an epicenter of AI innovation - Dr Montero is at the forefront of industry trends and thought leadership. His session provided valuable insights to attendees into the strategic wand ethical dimensions of AI, equipping them to better navigate the rapidly evolving future of work.

Esteemed international speaker, Dr Alfonso Montero

Passion is key to entrepreneurship, students told at WIL Workshop

Passion, hard work and dedication were the core themes shared with Tourism Management students during a Work Integrated Learning (WIL) workshop hosted by the Department of Tourism Management at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) on 25 June.

Held in Building 13, the workshop was organised by the department's WIL Coordinator, Kgomotso Mereotlhe and her dedicated team. In her welcome address, Mereotlhe explained that the workshop aimed to equip students with essential insights and expectations as they transition into the professional world.

She encouraged students to broaden their horizons when applying for WIL placements. "Don't limit yourselves to opportunities only within Pretoria. There are valuable experiences waiting in other regions too," she advised.

A key highlight of the event was the introduction of the Entrepreneur-Based WIL Programme presented by Dr Patrick Ebewo, Head of TUT's Centre for Entrepreneurship. As a guest speaker, Dr Ebewo outlined the structure and purpose of the six-month programme, which is primarily delivered online, runs from 7 July to 5 December.

"This programme is designed to help students become job creators, not just job seekers," he said. "It will be facilitated by professional coaches and includes three key phases: entrepreneurial planning, hands-on experiential entrepreneurship and launching a business venture."

Students from the Department of Tourism Management will be among the first to participate in this innovative

programme, which includes developing a business plan followed by the actual execution and growth of a startup.

Another inspiring voice at the event was Nokubonga Ngqola, founder and owner of Ekuthuleni Guesthouses. Despite having no formal background in tourism, she launched her hospitality business with passion and vision. She now runs two guesthouses in Soweto, one in Vosloorus and recently added a spa to her growing enterprise.

Ngqola, who employs 78 full-time and seven part-time staff, has also started mentoring others and accepting students for training. “I plan to own a hotel in KwaZulu-Natal within the next three years,” the determined businesswoman said.

Also addressing the students was Orlando Vargas, Director of The Cirk, who brings more than 20 years of experience in performing arts, event rigging and management. He echoed the importance of passion, especially in the early and uncertain phases of entrepreneurship.

“Success doesn’t come overnight,” he said. “Be prepared to work hard with minimal returns at first. But stay committed. Passion will carry you through.” Vargas added that he would be open to hosting students for WIL training opportunities.

Closing the event, Dr Pascal Tauoatsoala, Head of the Department of Tourism Management, commended the students for their attentiveness and engagement. He thanked the speakers for generously sharing their journeys and motivating the next generation of entrepreneurs.

TUT signs virtual MOU with Polytechnic University of the Philippines

In a first, strategic move to boost internalisation and sustainable collaboration, the Tshwane University of Technology’s Faculty of Management Sciences virtually signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP), San Juan Campus on 25 July 2025.

The process of signing the MoU was initiated by Prof Johan de Jager from the Department of Marketing, Supply Chain and Sport Management, who instantly fell in love with the country’s rich culture after attending a conference in Manila. Last year, after attending a conference in Asia, Prof De Jager visited PUP and through their discussions, it became evident that they wanted to collaborate with people from South Africa.

“Although these are early days, I am convinced that the two institutions of higher learning have a lot in common - both are mega institutions - and are able to positively interact with one another, not only between departments but also Faculties,” said Prof De Jager.

Welcoming delegates during the signing ceremony, Felicitas Trinidad, Assistant Professor and Director of the Office of International Affairs at PUP, said they were honoured to formalise a partnership that reflects the shared commitment to internationalisation, research collaboration, academic excellence and global engagement.

In highlighting the overview of the MoU, Cecillia Reyes Alagon, Campus Director of PUP, said the partnership will include mutual recognition of qualifications to facilitate post-graduate studies; the exchange of Faculty staff and students at both undergraduate and graduate levels; and the joint development of educational material and specialised courses.

“Both institutions agreed to support project-based learning and provide opportunities for students and staff to conduct research or academic work across campuses. In terms of research collaboration, the MoU facilitates the exchange of researchers, particularly during sabbatical leave and encourages joint research projects. In addition, each party may grant access to research equipment and facilities to support collaborative efforts. All financial obligations and logistical arrangements related to these activities will be discussed under separate agreements,” she said.

In his message of support, Dr Edgar Nesamvuni, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management Sciences, said that the MoU will enable access to all TUT programmes and faculties for students from PUP to exchange. “In support of the collaboration, TUT will focus mainly on teaching and learning, as well as research and community engagement. We would like to encourage staff exchange programmes where we see similarities in our programmes,” he said.

He also requested that young academics in all institutions be allowed to participate in an exchange programme at the undergraduate level in terms of teaching and learning, while at the senior level, we should focus more on research projects. He added that such agreements offer some of our students, mostly those who are financially constrained, an opportunity to travel abroad on exchange programmes.

Prof Johan de Jager, Dr Anthony Drotsky, Dr Edgar Nesamvuni, and Prof Ndivhuwo Tshipala, who represented TUT during the virtual signing ceremony.

TUT Tourism alumnus named 2025 Mail & Guardian Young South African

“TUT provided me with the foundation, knowledge, and confidence to pursue ambitious goals. The University’s support has been instrumental in my journey from student to an industry leader recognised at national and international levels,” says Mandia Magwaza, who is among the Top 200 Mail & Guardian Young South Africans for 2025.

Celebrating with the 32-year-old Magwaza, the Tshwane University of Technology commended the young man for his leadership and innovation in the tourism sector. The prestigious honour highlights Magwaza as one of South

Africa's brightest young changemakers, shaping industries and inspiring communities.

Magwaza's recognition comes alongside a series of recent accolades. This year alone, he received the Africa Tourism Award and the World Tourism Markets Africa Responsible Business Award: Increasing Local Sourcing and Creating Shared Value Responsible Tourism Award, accomplishments that highlight his role as a driving force for sustainable tourism and responsible business. He has also joined this year's G20-B20 Digital Transformation Task Force, contributing to the global discourse on technology and economic transformation.

In 2024, Magwaza was invited as a guest of the President to Parliament during the State of the Nation Address on 15 February.

On the significance of the award and recognition, Magwaza said: *"Receiving the Mail & Guardian Top 200 Young South Africans Award for Tourism is an incredible honour. It reflects not only my work but also the potential of the South African youth to drive innovation and excellence in the tourism sector. Tourism is not just about destinations, it is about people, culture and creating sustainable experiences that uplift communities. My work aims to ensure that tourism in South Africa is innovative, inclusive and globally competitive."*

Born in Katlehong, Gauteng, Magwaza appreciated his alma mater for the incredible role it has played in shaping his auspicious career path. According to him, serving on the G20-B20 Digital Transformation Task Force has been an eye-opening experience, which has allowed him to contribute South Africa's perspective to global policy discussions on innovation, technology, and sustainable tourism.

Beyond these accolades, Magwaza serves as the Founder of Entertainment Analytics Solutions, COO of ESG Sustainability Agency and Chairperson of Africa Small Business Development, where he champions entrepreneurship, sustainability and digital innovation.

He hopes that his journey will influence young South Africans to see that through vision, resilience and support, they can collectively transform our industries, influence global

conversations and make a real difference in society.

"Looking ahead, I am committed to using tourism as a platform for empowerment, sustainability and cultural preservation, ensuring that South Africa remains a leading destination on the global stage," said Magwaza.

Mandia Magwaza, who is among the Top 200 Mail & Guardian Young South Africans for 2025

Dynamic tourism scholar champions women in academia and industry

As South Africa celebrates Women's Month, a leading academic in the travel and events sector, Dr Lisa Welthagen from the Tshwane University of Technology, is being recognised for her remarkable contributions to education, industry innovation and women's empowerment. With more than 26 years of professional experience and a PhD in Tourism Management, she has become a driving force in shaping the country's tourism and events landscape, ensuring it is both locally sustainable and globally competitive.

Dr Welthagen's academic journey is rooted in the belief that education extends far beyond the classroom. She has dedicated her career to preparing students to make a meaningful impact in the real world by fostering cross-sector collaboration and advancing industry standards. Many of her graduates now hold leadership positions in the tourism and events sectors, while others have launched their own businesses, clear proof of her mentorship and influence.

Among her proudest milestones are leading the re-curriculation of the Event Management qualification, serving on the CEPA Council and being elected Vice Chair of the SACIA Event Safety Council (2023-2025). She has also contributed to updating national standards (SANS10366) through the SABS technical committee and played a key role in National Department of Tourism research projects. These achievements highlight her commitment to bridging academia, policy and practice.

Dr Welthagen's journey has not been without challenges. Like many women in academia, balancing professional demands with personal responsibilities required resilience. She overcame these by focusing on competence, consistency and collaboration, allowing her results to speak louder than assumptions. She also cultivated strong professional networks that value expertise over gender - a strategy that not only strengthened her career but also positioned her as an advocate for inclusive academic and professional spaces.

Reflecting on her impact, she emphasises that her work benefits students, the industry and communities alike. By aligning education with practice, she promotes safer, more sustainable and inclusive events that benefit society as a whole. *"Knowing that my contributions have helped shape both people and practice is what makes this work deeply fulfilling," she says.*

To young women aspiring to enter academia, her advice is clear: "Go into every room knowing that your voice and thoughts are heard. Don't be afraid to step beyond your comfort zone. The opportunities you create for yourself - and those you embrace - will shape your path. Above all, remember that academics are about changing the world for your students, your field and your community."

Dr Lisa Welthagen, a leading academic in the travel and events sector in South Africa

TUT's Dr Lawson Naidoo appointed to Ministerial Advisory Committee on Curriculum and Quality Assurance

The Tshwane University of Technology's (TUT) Dr Lawson Naidoo, Section Head: Research and Postgraduate Studies at the Faculty of Management Sciences, has been appointed to the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Curriculum and Quality Assurance.

The prestigious appointment, formally approved by lnkosi Mzamo Buthelezi, Minister for the Public Service and Administration, took effect on l September 2025. The Committee plays a crucial role in shaping curriculum development, strengthening quality standards and advancing public sector training and education in South Africa.

Dr Naidoo brings to the role a wealth of expertise in supply chain management, research methodology and public procurement, as well as a strong record of academic research and professional contributions. In addition to his appointment being a personal milestone, it also reinforces TUT's standing as a leader in applied research and knowledge production that addresses both national and global challenges.

Congratulating him on the achievement, Dr Antonie Drotsky, Head of the Department of Marketing, Supply Chain and Sport Management, said: *"We wish Dr Naidoo success as he represents TUT on this important platform and contributes towards shaping curriculum and quality assurance at the highest level."*

Dr Lawson Naidoo, newly appointed member of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Curriculum and Quality Assurance

Academic leader drives change through entrepreneurship and community impact

The Marcia Lebambo Foundation, established in 2012, has become a beacon of hope for learners in under-resourced schools across Southern Africa. The non-profit organisation focuses on improving literacy among children in townships and rural areas by teaching reading and writing skills through engaging programmes, such as storytelling, writing clubs, and book summarisation, as well as its flagship initiative – the Spelling Bee competition.

As South Africa marks Women's Month, the story of the foundation's founder, Dr Marcia Lebambo, highlights the power of resilience, vision and academic excellence to transform communities. Rising from the rural villages of Bushbuckridge in Mpumalanga, Dr Lebambo has built her career on the belief that education and entrepreneurship can drive meaningful change. Today, she serves as Section Head: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies at TUT's Department of Management and Entrepreneurship.

In her academic capacity, she specialises in entrepreneurship policies, small business development, technological entrepreneurship and management, as well as youth entrepreneurship in rural and township contexts. Driven by the aspiration to become South Africa's most sought-after Entrepreneurship Professor, she continues to influence discourse and policies aimed at reshaping socio-economic conditions through self-employment and innovation.

Among her proudest achievements is mentoring postgraduate students, especially women and first-generation scholars, many of whom have gone on to graduate, publish in journals, lead community initiatives, pursue doctoral studies and even earn PhDs. Her leadership as section head and as chair of her department's Research and Postgraduate Committee has further advanced her research development within the Faculty.

Like many women in academia, Dr Lebambo has faced subtle gender discrimination and dismissal. She overcame these challenges by remaining assertive, building confidence and completing two prestigious Women in Leadership programmes offered by TUT's Business School and the Nelson Mandela University's School of Education. These initiatives equipped her with practical tools in self-awareness, leadership and resilience.

Her influence reaches far beyond academia. Through the Marcia Lebambo Foundation's literacy initiatives, more than 5,000 learners in South Africa and Lesotho have been empowered to read, write and dream bigger futures. By combining her research with grassroots impact, Dr Lebambo embodies a holistic approach to education that bridges scholarship, leadership and community development.

To young women aspiring to venture into academia, she advises: *"Take the leap, even if you're unsure and scared - do it!. Success waits on the other side of fear. Embrace every role you hold and never leave any part of yourself behind. Seek out your tribe of mentors, family and supporters because the journey is not easy. Do not compare yourself to anyone - most importantly, give yourself grace and permission to start again as many times as you need to."*

Dr Lobambo's journey reminds us that academia is more than knowledge production - it is about shaping lives, influencing policy and building stronger communities.

Dr Marcia Lebambo, Section Head: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies at the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship in the Faculty of Management Sciences

Event Safety Innovation expert represents TUT at Industry Summit

Dr Lisa Welthagen, Tshwane University of Technology {TUT) Senior Lecturer and Event Safety expert, represented TUT and shared her comprehensive knowledge in the field, during the prestigious Event Safety Summit hosted by the Southern African Communications Industries Association (SACIA). During the annual summit professionals, academics and policymakers convene to strengthen safety practices and align global standards across Southern Africa's events and live entertainment sectors.

A dedicated member of the Event Safety Council since 2020, Welthagen has served as Vice-Chair from 2023 to 2025 and played a key role in shaping SACIA's professional designations. At this year's summit, she emphasised the importance of bridging academic expertise with industry practice to enhance safety standards throughout the events sector.

She was joined by a Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) student and two final-year Event Planning students through a Memorandum of Understanding between TUT's Department of Tourism and the Department of Sport. Their participation offered valuable exposure to real-world industry debates and professional networking opportunities.

Event safety is not just about compliance; protecting lives is at the core of ensuring well-being and reducing potential hazards for all involved," Welthagen said. *"Through research, training and collaboration with industry, TUT is committed to preparing graduates who can contribute meaningfully to safer events."*

Her leadership reinforces TUT's commitment to aligning academic excellence with industry needs, ensuring the University plays an influential role in shaping the future of event safety in South Africa.

Dr Lisa Welthagen shares her comprehensive knowledge and expertise in the field during the prestigious Event Safety Summit

Faculty celebrates student academic excellence

"Leadership is a mindset of overcoming all oppositions you face in life. While we celebrate your achievements, you should not be happy with mediocre, but should always strive for the best," these were the opening words of **motivational speaker, Linda Ntuli**, during the annual Top Achievers Awards ceremony of the Faculty of Management Sciences held recently at the Theunis Bester Hall.

The highlight of the event was four students receiving the Dean's Awards for exceptional hard work. They are: DS Moretlwe for Best Diploma student in Retail Business Management; TD Alese for Best Advanced Diploma in Marketing; NTM Tshiyole for Best Advanced Diploma in Supply Chain Management and KE Mokgoko for Best Postgraduate student in Human Resource Management (HRM Stream). Welcoming the guests, Prof Ndivhuwo Tshipala, Assistant Dean of Teaching and Learning at the Faculty, said the Awards ceremony is a prestigious occasion where the Faculty celebrates the hard work of its students. *"This celebration must not end here - after today, the journey continues towards achieving other awards and successes,"* he told students.

He also thanked the parents, who made numerous sacrifices to ensure that their children received a good education, as well as the lecturers, who worked hard to academically empower the students.

Ntuli urged students to complete what they start and to finish strong. He said they should remember that they represent not only themselves and their families but also their institution, TUT.

He encouraged students not to settle for less than their best. *"Do not be satisfied with a 78% pass rate if you know you can achieve 100%,"* he said.

He added that while celebrating their achievements, students should aim higher and work towards graduating cum laude.

He challenged them to focus on improving themselves rather than trying to prove themselves, saying self-improvement benefits both the individual and those around them.

Linda Ntuli is an Electrical Engineer turned Management Consultant and Motivational speaker, Team Builder, Trainer, Facilitator, Author, Program Director and Life Coach with excellent personal, organisational and client relationship management capabilities.

Pictured from left are: Prof Ndivhuwo Tshipala, NTN Tshiyole, DS Moretlwe, TD Alese, KE Mokgoko and Linda Ntuli

Pretoria's inaugural Startup Huddle aims to empower local entrepreneurs

Pretoria, South Africa's administrative capital, has welcomed a new platform for innovation and entrepreneurship. The Tshwane University of Technology's (TUT) Centre for Entrepreneurship officially launched the Startup Huddle, a global initiative aimed at promoting entrepreneurial growth and building community networks.

Operated by the **Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN)**, Startup Huddle is active in more than 60 cities worldwide. The programme enables local entrepreneurs to present their business challenges in concise sessions, where the community listens, offers advice and collaborates on solutions. This approach not only provides practical support but also fosters meaningful connections among entrepreneurs, businesses and ideas.

At the launch, Dr Vathiswa Papu-Zamxaka, TUT's Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation, emphasised the initiative's broader impact. "Startup Huddle is a movement uniting innovators, entrepreneurs and changemakers. It offers mentorship and access to networks, while transforming ideas into businesses that drive economic and community progress," she said.

Pretty Tsholofelo Ndlovu, Global Director of Startup Huddle, highlighted the programme's purpose. "This platform creates a space for entrepreneurs to freely share challenges and receive constructive feedback. Our goal is to build a supportive community that collaborates to find solutions and drives entrepreneurial success," she explained.

Startup Huddle's unique model promotes a cycle of support. Each month, two entrepreneurs present their journeys, receiving feedback and encouragement from attendees. To ensure a growing network of guidance and collaboration, previous presenters also return as mentors.

Dr Patrick Ebewo, Pretoria's Startup Huddle Chapter Lead, captured the essence of the programme. "Startup Huddle is both a conversation and a platform for action. We aim to forge meaningful partnerships and empower entrepreneurs, one story at a time," he said.

By joining this global network, Pretoria is strengthening its local economy and nurturing future business leaders. With TUT's commitment to producing #FutureReadyGraduates and GEN's mission to connect entrepreneurs worldwide, the Pretoria Startup Huddle chapter promises to be a dynamic hub where ideas flourish, collaborations thrive and entrepreneurs find the support they need to succeed.

Pretty Tsholofelo Ndlovu, Global Director of Startup Huddle

Students attending the launch of the Startup Huddle

Dr Edgar Nesamvuni, Executive Dean: Faculty of Management Sciences and Dr Vathiswa Papu-Zamxaka, TUT's Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation

Dean's seminar reflects on Tourism industry's successes and challenges

Celebrating Tourism Month and the start of Spring, the Tshwane University of Technology's Faculty of Management Sciences hosted a Dean's seminar at the Pretoria Campus, featuring world-renowned Prof Clifford Lewis, who delivered a paper titled "Tourism and minoritised groups: towards a stigma-informed lens of tourism development".

Opening the event, Prof Uwe Hermann, the programme director and Section Head for Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies at Tourism Management, said Tourism Month is an appropriate time for tourism practitioners and researchers to reflect on the successes, importance and challenges of the industry as well as seek opportunities and answers to those challenges.

Prof Lewis said, while tourism is a growing industry that contributes about 70% to the global economy and creates about 367 million jobs globally, it is not all inclusive, especially to people living with disabilities, the LGBTQ+ community and indigenous people.

According to him, researchers and practitioners have a responsibility to ensure that tourism is accessible to everyone and benefits all equally. "Minorities make a significant contribution to the sector; therefore, we must challenge tourism systems and regulations to become more inclusive," he said.

"Tourism under neo-liberalism offers empowerment, but often only at the price of commodification. Our challenge

is to imagine a form of tourism that values disabled people, LGBTQ+ and the indigenous identities as markets," he concluded.

Prof Clifford Lewis

Prof Uwe Hermann

From Mukondeni to the world: How TUT's Sharon Mukhola is redefining Hospitality Education

From a small village in Limpopo to the lecture halls of the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and global recognition in the United States, Sharon Aluwani Mukhola is living proof that passion, purpose and perseverance can transform lives. The TUT alumna, now an NGAP Academic Lecturer in Hospitality Management and Fulbright Research Fellow, has built a career that bridges industry, education and mentorship, inspiring the next generation of hospitality professionals.

Born and raised in the Mukondeni Village, Sharon's journey was shaped by a deep respect for education. With a father who was a higher education academic and a mother who taught in local schools, the pursuit of knowledge was a family tradition. She still recalls the life-changing advice her father gave her in Grade 10: *"Never make money your biggest motivator in life. Do what you love and money will follow."*

That wisdom remains the compass guiding her personal and professional journey.

Finding her calling at TUT, Sharon's passion for hospitality was nurtured at the University where her lecturers identified her strengths and built her confidence. "I wasn't the best in the kitchen, but I excelled academically and loved working with people and marketing," she said. "Their encouragement made me realise I could also be that person for someone else."

That realisation later inspired her to return to TUT as a lecturer, determined to pay forward the mentorship she once received.

Before joining academia, Mukhola made her mark in the hospitality industry by joining Protea Hotels by Marriott and quickly rising from coordinator to key account executive, earning awards such as Coordinator of the Year and Sales Executive of the Year.

Her leadership journey continued at CATHSSETA, where she spent nearly a decade as Regional Manager and Hospitality Chamber Manager, shaping national strategies for skills development in the sector.

Today, she balances academia and research, pursuing her Doctor of Management Science (DMSc) in Food Operations Management. Her work focuses on bridging the gap between higher education and the hospitality industry to improve graduate employability.

Mentorship through realism and purpose, Sharon's teaching philosophy is grounded in preparing students for the real world.

"You can spend years studying. only to be shocked by your first job," she says. "I prepare my students for the realities - long hours, persistence and the importance of building relationships. Once you find your place and nurture it, opportunities will follow."

Beyond her lectures, she serves on industry advisory boards, participates in hospitality events and leverages her professional networks to open doors for her students.

Global recognition and lasting impact

Her excellence has not gone unnoticed. As a Fulbright Research Fellow at North Carolina Central University, Sharon received the Top Research Presentation Award in the Business School (Graduate Category) and was inducted into the Eta Sigma Delta International Honour Society for Hospitality and Tourism Management.

Yet, her heart remains with TUT.

"My foundation was built here. TUT shaped my confidence and drive to succeed. Now, my mission is to ensure the next generation of graduates is prepared for global opportunities."

Sharon credits her strong circle of fellow TUT alumni as her personal "advisory board." Among them are leaders such as a Senior ICT Manager at the South African Reserve Bank, a Chief Operations Officer in medical technology and a Regional Procurement Manager for BP in Southern Africa.

"They are living proof of TUT's ability to produce graduates who make a meaningful impact," she says. "You are only as strong as the people you surround yourself with."

As a mentor and role model, Sharon continues to champion authenticity and purpose-driven careers. Her advice to students is heartfelt and timeless: *"Always ask yourself who you are and what makes you special. Nurture it, grow it and release it into the world with love. Do what makes you happy; never chase what only looks prestigious. Passion shows - and people love working with those who love what they do."*

Sharon Mukhola TUT Alumna, NGAP Academic lecturer and Fulbright Research Fellow

As a mentor and role model, Sharon Muhkola continuously champions authenticity and purpose-driven careers.

Management Sciences launches inaugural postgraduate research symposium

Research took centre stage at the Faculty of Management Sciences as scholars, supervisors and innovators gathered for the Faculty's first-ever Postgraduate Research Symposium, themed "Empowering Research for Impact and Innovation." The landmark event brought together Postgraduate Diploma, Master's and Doctoral candidates who showcased their work through oral and poster presentations - creating a lively platform for academic exchange, collaboration and inspiration.

Postgraduate research symposiums like this play a vital role in shaping South Africa's research landscape. They help emerging scholars refine their ideas and methodologies as well as fostering a culture of inquiry that fuels innovation, policy development and real-world impact. Such events serve as incubators for solutions to pressing social and economic challenges while strengthening the bridge between academia, industry and government.

In his opening remarks, Dr Edgar Nesamvuni: Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management Sciences, described the symposium as *"a landmark initiative that strengthens our mission of cultivating a vibrant and impactful research culture."* He emphasised that the event represents more than a showcase of student work - it is a commitment to nurturing future scholars whose research directly contributes to South Africa's developmental priorities.

Dr Edgar Nesamvuni, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management Sciences

Setting an inspiring tone for the day, Dr Hamilton Mphidi, Director of Technology Transfer at the University of Johannesburg, delivered the keynote address on "Empowering Research for Impact and Innovation." He challenged postgraduate researchers to view their studies as transformative tools capable of driving tangible change in society. *"Our research must move beyond publications and citations - it should transform communities, industries and lives,"* he said.

Dr Mphidi's message strongly aligned with TUT's vision of producing research that is socially responsive, industry-relevant and globally competitive. His address inspired attendees to think boldly about the purpose and power of applied research in addressing inequality, sustainability, and economic growth.

Dr Hamilton Mphidi, Director of Technology Transfer at the University of Johannesburg

The symposium also featured a distinguished panel of academics (picture below) from across TUT's faculties, underscoring the University's focus on cross-disciplinary collaboration. Among the participants were Dr Johnny Mthimunye, Dr Sabryna Mambadja, Dr Glory Chiloane, Dr Maria Mushathoni, and Prof Bongazana Dondolo from the Faculty of Humanities; Dr Lesego Phetlhe from the Faculty of Science; and Ms Molebogeng Makofane, Ms Sally Ledwaba, Ms Tsholofelo Tladi, and Dr Henry lgugu from the Faculty of Engineering.

Dr Sharol Mkhomazi, Assistant Dean for Research, led the Faculty Research Team that organised the event. She described the symposium as "a developmental platform that builds confidence, fosters collaboration and equips our postgraduate students to become thought leaders and change agents."

She added that such forums are critical for helping students develop scholarly independence while receiving valuable feedback from peers and mentors.

Dr Sharol Mkhomazi, Assistant Dean for Research and Postgraduate Studies

As the day drew to a close, a shared sense of pride and purpose prevailed. The 2025 Postgraduate Research Symposium set a new standard for research engagement within the Faculty of Management Sciences, laying the groundwork for an annual tradition that celebrates intellectual achievement, inspires innovation and reinforces TUT's role as a hub of knowledge creation and societal progress.

"This symposium is just the beginning," said Dr Nesamvuni. "It marks our commitment to growing a generation of scholars whose ideas will shape the future of our country."

Outstanding participants were recognised with awards for best oral and poster presentations across postgraduate categories, celebrating excellence, creativity and research impact.

TUT hosts annual event aimed at driving tourism sector growth

The Tshwane University of Technology's Centre for Sustainable Development and Innovation at the Faculty of Management Sciences, in collaboration with the Faculty of Economics and Finance and the Procurement Department, hosted the 2025 annual Tourism Compliance and Supplier Exhibition Day at the Pretoria Campus. Themed *Tourism taxes and trades: driving sustainable growth and inclusive access,* the event brought together various TUT suppliers and tourism stakeholders, while marking the importance of compliance in growing a sustainable tourism sector in the country.

Setting the scene, Dr Portia Sifolo, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Development and Innovation, said the Centre is playing its part in growing a sustainable tourism sector and is currently observing environmental, social and government indicators to measure, monitor, as well as drive progress toward sustainable development goals within the scope of its operations and focus area.

Dr Portia Sifolo, Director for the Centre for Sustainable Development

Delivering the keynote address, Boitumelo Daniels from the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA), outlined the importance of a 'tourism levy', highlighting its importance in sustaining and strengthening businesses within the tourism industry. Daniels emphasised that partnerships among government, industry councils and business owners are crucial to attracting investment and positioning South Africa competitively in global tourism markets.

Ms Boitumelo Daniels, from the Tourism Business Council of South Africa delivering her keynote address

Accentuating the industry's importance as an economic driver and encouraging compliance, resilience and engagement among professionals, a range of tourism attractions, businesses and hotels showcased their services and contributions in the sector.

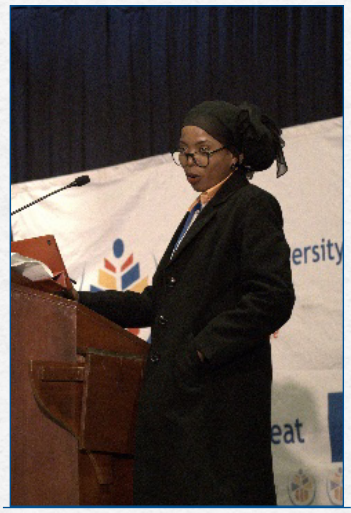
Tourism compliance was another major topic discussed during the panel discussion at the event. TUT's Tax Clinic participated in the discussion, sharing its tax expertise and insights with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Advising SMEs, Jerry Netshandama and Khutso Dandane from the Department of Accounting and the Tax Clinic both highlighted the importance of business registration and record-keeping as crucial steps for tax compliance. They outlined that the first steps to receiving business funding are registration and tax compliance.

"Businesses should understand the difference between income and cash flow because those two tools work together to keep the business running. They must be able to track profits and losses as well as differentiate between items and expenses that are not cash inventory," said Dandane.

Emphasising Dandane's points, Netshandama recommended record-keeping software and mobile applications that small businesses can explore to ensure accuracy and efficiency to grow their businesses.

Rosa Naude-Potgieter, lecturer and section head at the Department of Tourism Management, emphasised the importance of financial literacy for students and the need for the inclusion of new financial models in tourism qualifications.

According to Beverly Nchabeleng, Lecturer at the Department of Tourism, the Tourism sector is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the country, contributing approximately 8.1 % of the gross domestic product.



Dr Beverley Nchabeleng, Lecturer in the Department of Tourism Management

"To grow a sustainable tourism eco-system, we need to strengthen partnerships across sectors; to build international collaboration; to align policy with growth; to drive innovation; to empower SMMEs; to monitor, measure and record; and to promote responsible tourism," she said in wrapping up the event and mapping the way forward.

In conclusion, she emphasised that policymakers should create an enabling environment to drive sustainable tourism economic growth.

Hospitality Management honours industry partners

The Department of Hospitality Management at TUT's Faculty of Management Sciences hosted an Appreciation Dinner to recognise industry partners who play a vital role in shaping future hospitality professionals.

Government representatives, CATHSSETA officials, the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management Sciences, employers who host students the Directorate of Co-operative Education and departmental staff attended the event. Employers received certificates in recognition of the practical training and mentorship they provide to students.

The Directorate of Co-operative Education, led by Dr Roelien Brink and her team, was also acknowledged for coordinating student placements and strengthening collaboration between the University and industry.

Programme Director, Florence Masebe, highlighted the value of partnerships in producing work-ready graduates. She said when education, industry and government work together, students benefit the most.

Florence Masebe, Program Director

Lebohang Mpye from CATHSSETA reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to student development and capacity building in the tourism and hospitality sector. She noted that the partnership with the Department of Hospitality Management supports efforts to empower students and strengthen the workforce.

Assistant Dean for Teaching and Learning at the Faculty of Management Sciences, Prof Ndivhuwo Tshipala, emphasised the long-term impact of Work Integrated Learning. He said it is more than an academic requirement and represents an investment in students' futures with success reflecting the shared contribution of all partners.

The Department also outlined plans for the year ahead including a monthly webinar series on work readiness, the establishment of the Tshwane Hospitality Forum to deepen collaboration with employers and a roundtable discussion on skills needed in modern hospitality. Industry professionals were encouraged to participate in online programmes and postgraduate research activities.

The evening concluded with networking that reinforced a shared commitment to preparing students for successful careers in the hospitality sector.

Prof Ndivhuwo Tshipala, Assistant Dean Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Management Sciences

Staff members from the Department of Hospitality Management and guests at the special occasion

Entrepreneurs recognised at Supplier Development event

The Faculty of Management Sciences, in partnership with the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Development, awarded Certificates of Competence to entrepreneurs at a Supplier Development event, marking the successful completion of the New Venture Creation and Entrepreneurship programme.

The certificates were presented by Dr Edgar Nesamvuni, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management Sciences, who commended the entrepreneurs for their commitment to developing practical business skills and strengthening their readiness for sustainable enterprise development.

The event also featured a keynote address by Ms Hetty Boachie, who spoke to the realities entrepreneurs are facing and the ambitions that drive them. She encouraged participants to enter 2026 with a clear intention to guide their decisions, to practise self-mentorship during periods of low motivation, to take steady and consistent action and to approach the year with purpose and structure.

The Supplier Development event reinforced the Faculty's commitment to nurturing entrepreneurial capability and supporting emerging businesses through focused training and development initiatives.

Ms Hetty Boachie

Evidence-based research drives tourism growth at national seminar

Researchers, academics and government leaders gathered at the University of Pretoria on 24 October 2025 for the Tourism Research Seminar focused on advancing tourism growth development and sustainability through evidence-based research. The seminar was hosted in partnership by TUT's Department of Tourism and the University of Pretoria, providing a platform for collaboration between government and academia to strengthen South Africa's tourism sector.

Tourism remains one of South Africa's key economic sectors due to its role in job creation, support for local businesses and contribution to economic growth across communities. In 2022, the sector supported more than 730 000 direct jobs, highlighting its importance to sustainable socio-economic development and its strong economic multiplier effect.

The seminar aligned with the national call for evidence-based decision-making as emphasised by President Cyril Ramaphosa and the Government of National Unity. Through this engagement, stakeholders explored how research can inform policy and practice to build a more resilient and sustainable tourism industry.

The DVC for Research, Innovation and Engagement, from TUT, Dr Vathiswa Papu-Zamxaka

Delivering a message of support Dr Vathiswa Papu-Zamxaka, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research Innovation and Engagement at TUT, reflected on the collaboration between TUT, the University of Pretoria and the National Department of Tourism. She noted that universities are not in competition but complement and support one another. She said it was encouraging to see institutions, including those from outside South Africa, working together to share ideas and advance a common goal.

Dr Papu-Zamxaka emphasised the role of research technology and innovation in shaping the future of tourism. She highlighted TUT's contribution to research that enables small tourism businesses to use digital tools to grow and access global markets. She added that universities exist to solve real-life problems and that strong partnerships with government and industry can help build a tourism sector that creates jobs, supports communities and drives meaningful transformation.

TUT's research contribution was showcased by a team led by Dr Portia Sifolo, which included Dr Lisa Welthagen, Dr Rosa-Ann Naudé-Potgieter and Mukhethwa Londani. The team presented a study titled *Exploring the Digital Technology Adoption Landscape of Niche Tourism SMMEs in South Africa*, which examines how small specialised tourism enterprises can use digital technology to enhance growth, competitiveness and visitor experiences.

Dr Portia Sifolo

The study outlined practical strategies for digital adoption, including access to affordable internet through solar-powered edge computing hubs, the development of immersive metaverse tourism experiences in townships and rural areas using existing networks, as well as the use of drones for biodiversity monitoring to support sustainable tourism. The researchers also stressed the importance of strategic planning, digital skills development, secure systems, supportive policies and targeted training to ensure tourism SMMEs succeed in the digital era.

Mr Mukhethwa Londani

The seminar highlighted the value of collaborative evidence-based research in shaping a stronger more inclusive and sustainable tourism sector for South Africa.

Dr Lisa Welthagen & Dr Rosa Naudé Potgieter

Student entrepreneurship programme launched with Visa partnership

TUT has launched the Student Entrepreneurship Development Programme, powered by the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development and Visa, with support from the Banking Association of South Africa. The initiative will equip 250 final-year students from three campuses with business skills, mentorship and coaching to help them launch their own ventures. The top 20 participants will each receive R2 000 in seed funding to kickstart their business ideas.

Dr Vathiswa Papu-Zamxaka, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Engagement

Delivering the opening and welcome address, Dr Vathiswa Papu-Zamxaka, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research Innovation and Engagement, highlighted the importance of creating real opportunities for student entrepreneurs through strong partnerships. She said the programme goes beyond addressing unemployment and empowers students to take control of their futures and build stronger communities.

The Deputy Minister of Small Business Development, Jane Sithole, delivered the keynote address at the Visa partnership launch. She praised young entrepreneurs for turning ideas into action and said their businesses bring hope, strengthen the nation and create a lasting legacy for future generations.

Deputy Minister of Small Business Development, Jane Sithole

Dr Edgar Nesamvuni, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management Sciences, emphasised that entrepreneurship is embedded in the Faculty's DNA. He added that the programme and the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development are designed to empower all students, including those not formally studying entrepreneurship, by equipping them with the skills needed to grow and launch successful businesses.

The launch marked a significant step in strengthening student entrepreneurship and supporting innovation driven by youth at TUT.

Dr Edgar Nesamvuni, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Management Sciences

Students attending the launch of the student development Entrepreneurship programme

Management Sciences celebrates new Master's graduates

TUT's Faculty of Management Sciences conferred 19 Master's degrees at the 2025 Spring Graduation Ceremony, marking a significant academic milestone for the Faculty and its graduates.

The achievement reflects the hard work, resilience and academic excellence of graduates who pushed beyond challenges to complete their postgraduate studies. The ceremony formed part of TUT's Spring Graduation programme, which celebrates scholarly achievement across faculties and recognises the contribution of postgraduate qualifications to research innovation and leadership development.

As the saying goes, success is not final, it is the courage to continue that counts. The occasion celebrated academic success but also the determination, discipline and commitment that define future leaders in management sciences and related fields.

The Faculty congratulated the graduates on their accomplishments and wished them continued success as they apply their knowledge and skills in academia, industry and society.

Webinar Highlights importance of empowering and future-proofing HR professionals through People Analytics

With people analytics emerging as a vital discipline for modern HR professionals, the niche group *The Living Wage, Executive Remuneration, Human Resource (HR) Data Analytics and Human Resource Outcomes* hosted an MS Teams webinar titled **"People Analytics in Human Resource Management Practitioners"** on 29 May 2025. The session attracted an impressive audience of 123 participants, signalling a growing interest in data-informed human resource practices in South Africa and beyond.

The multi-purpose event was designed to raise awareness about the role and value of people analytics in HRM, as well as announcing the start of the Tshwane University of Technology's exciting new CPD credit-bearing Short Learning Programme (SLP) offering, this programme offers a timely and much-needed upskilling opportunity.

Kicking off the event, Prof Molefe Maleka, niche leader and senior academic at TUT, outlined the purpose of the People Analytics SLP to equip HR practitioners with data-driven decision-making capabilities and reduce reliance on gut feel or intuition. According to him, analytics skills are not just "nice to have", they are essential for strategic thinking, improving operational efficiency and ultimately, making HR a strategic business partner. The training, he explained, builds a foundation in metrics, Excel proficiency and storytelling, enabling participants to extract insights from data and communicate those insights effectively.

Prof Molefe Maleka, Campus Director eMahlaleni Campus, Tshwane University of Technology

Key insights from Prof Maleka's presentation

During his detailed presentation, Prof Maleka provided real-world context to the concepts covered in the upcoming course. He introduced a powerful framework that outlines what's currently "lacking" in HR - HR-optimisation, forecasting and correlation, describing these as forms of predictive and diagnostic analytics.

"For example," he explained, "correlation can show that people with more experience in an organisation tend to earn higher salaries. Likewise, if there's high attrition, predictive analytics can help us investigate the root causes."

He emphasised that attendees of the SLP will gain hands-on exposure to regression techniques that help with forecasting, such as predicting future earnings based on years of service or experience level. These techniques are crucial in building strategic insights and informing planning processes.

Excel as a data analytics tool

One of the highlights of Prof Maleka's talk was the emphasis on Excel as a critical tool in people analytics. He addressed a common concern: *"Previously, people avoided Excel because it required memorising formulas and statistical procedures."*

"However, with modern AI enhancements in Excel - including the introduction of tools like **Copilot** - the software has become significantly more user-friendly. Users can now use prompt engineering to perform complex analyses with ease. You can highlight your data and ask it to show the relationship between, say, compensation and experience," he explained. "Excel will provide a step-by-step guide and even generate diagrams to visualise those relationships. This democratisation of analytics tools means that HR professionals no longer need a background in data science to make sense of workforce trends," he said.

Cultivating business acumen and metrics to elevate the HR role

Another major theme in Prof Maleka's talk was the need to cultivate business acumen within HR departments.

He noted how HR needs to speak the language of business. "How can HR be used to improve business performance?

This is what's currently missing in most HR literature."

Participants in the SLP will be taught to interpret and apply key HR metrics, including:

- ROI in training and development;
- How people analytics can attract and retain employees;
- The link between remuneration and job satisfaction; and
- How job satisfaction predicts cost outcomes, such as employee turnover and recruitment expenses.

These insights empower HR professionals to quantify their impact and reduce costs associated with talent loss — a key factor in sustaining a competitive edge.

The Art of Storytelling in People Analytics

Towards the end of his presentation, Prof Maleka touched on a topic often overlooked in data training, storytelling. According to him, statistical techniques like regression are important, but business leaders care about statistical insights to make decisions, not equations.

Storytelling, translating complex analysis into clear, actionable insights, is a core component of the SLP. This will ensure that HR professionals can not only run the numbers but also influence strategic conversations in their organisations.

"When you present to business leaders, they don't want to know how you did the regression. They want to know how it helps them gain a competitive advantage," he explained.

The webinar also featured respected voices from the HR field, including Zogan Opperman, HR Director at Tsebo and Ms Irene Skosana, TUT's HR Director. Both shared experiences from their leadership roles and stressed the importance of data-driven decision-making.

Their perspectives grounded the discussion in real-world relevance, showing that people analytics is more than theory; it is an evolving practice reshaping HR's role across industries. Prof Maleka closed the session with a powerful reminder: "To shape the future of work, HR must embrace the future of data." The overwhelming interest in the webinar and upcoming course affirms a growing demand for upskilling in analytics and strategic HR thinking."

For more information on the SLP (25 CPD points), please phone Tel: +2712 382 4037 or email EnquiriesCE@tut.ac.za.

TUT graduate Matimba shines in national leadership role in Presidency

A Tshwane University of Technology graduate with an Advanced Diploma in Business Administration is making his mark in South Africa's corridors of power. **Matimba**, the Stakeholder Engagement and Community Outreach Officer in the Office of Deputy Minister, Nonceba Mhlauli, proves that ambition and dedication can lead to real impact in public service.

Matimba's role places him at the heart of efforts to strengthen government's connection with communities and key stakeholders. His work supports Deputy Minister Mhlauli's community outreach and engagement across the country.

This position exemplifies how education from TUT fuels leadership and influence within the nation's "corridors of power," specifically through national service and community outreach.

Matimba attributes his success to the foundation provided by the Advanced Diploma in Business Administration, demonstrating the University's commitment to producing graduates who are "future-ready" for leadership roles

Students lead wetlands clean-up for World Water Day

About 50 Eco and Adventure Tourism students from TUT's Mbombela campus volunteered in a wetlands clean-up on 24 March 2025 in support of **World Water Day**. The initiative with **Chimp Eden,** aimed to protect this vital ecosystem and raise awareness about the importance of healthy water systems and environmental stewardship.

"We are proud of our students," said Dr Breytenbach, Academic Manager at the campus.

World Water Day is remembered annually to highlight the importance of freshwater and encourage actions that protect water resources. Clean wetlands and waterways are essential, as they act as natural filters and help maintain clean water supplies for people, wildlife and agriculture. Wetlands store surface water, recharge groundwater and reduce flooding risks while supporting biodiversity and jobs in tourism and related sectors. Healthy wetlands also contribute to climate resilience by absorbing excess water and storing carbon from the atmosphere.

Conservation efforts such as clean-ups play a key role in reversing the global loss of wetland areas, which continue to face degradation from pollution, land conversion and unsustainable use. Wetland protection supports water quality, human livelihoods and the long-term sustainability of ecosystems that many communities depend on.

The Mbombela campus clean-up reinforced TUT's commitment to environmental responsibility and showcased

student leadership in addressing real-world ecological challenges. World Water Day events like this emphasise the connection between community action and broader efforts to safeguard water resources for future generations.

Operations Management seminar explores sustainable supply chains and industry insights

The Department of Operations Management at Tshwane University of Technology hosted a research seminar on 13 March 2025, featuring presentations by **Dr Swayam Sampurna Panigrahi** and **Victor Rambau**. The seminar provided a platform for students and Faculty staff to engage with emerging trends in sustainable operations and practical industry management.

Dr Panigrahi, Assistant Professor at IFMR Graduate School of Business in India, is a distinguished Operations Management academic specialising in Sustainable Supply Chain Management. She has received multiple awards for her scholarly contributions including two Best Paper awards and the prestigious “MSME Fellowship” from the National Institute for Micro Small and Medium Enterprises.

Her research covers sustainable supply chain management, business and human rights, e-waste management, Industry 4.0 and other areas. She has published in esteemed international journals and delivered lectures at leading institutions worldwide.

Rambau is a seasoned executive with extensive experience in operations management across construction, banking, manufacturing, mining and public sectors. He holds an MBA and a BTech in Operations Management and is a certified Six Sigma Black Belt. Mr Rambau has held leadership roles including CEO of Johannesburg Roads Agency (JRA) and HOD of Human Settlements for the City of Johannesburg. He also chairs the Ekurhuleni Housing Corporation board and has served on numerous audit and risk committees including SACAB. His research interests include operations excellence and artificial intelligence and systems thinking.

The seminar provided insights to participants into sustainable operations strategies, bridging academic research with practical industry application. Dr Panigrahi highlighted global trends in supply chain sustainability and how emerging technologies can drive efficiency and responsibility in operations. Rambau shared lessons from his extensive leadership experience, emphasising strategic decision-making, risk management and innovation in complex operational environments.

According to the Department of Operations Management, the seminar underscores the importance of integrating research with industry practice to prepare students for leadership roles in operations and supply chain management.

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