SCHOLARSHIPS SCOOP
2019
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FOREWORD

Excellence to Liberate and Decolonise the Minds of Youth

In pursuit of excellence in student academic performance in line with Goals 1 and 2 of the UKZN Strategic Plan 2017-2021, the University of KwaZulu-Natal selects a wide range of students who have shown excellence in their academic performance for the award of scholarships and merit awards. The oversight role of ensuring fair and equitable allocation of these awards to students with outstanding performance is played by the Scholarships Committee of Senate, on behalf of our generous funders who give to support the University Scholarship Fund. Over the years, this has helped to maintain a very good relationship with our funders and we are eternally grateful for their support.

Once every year, the University hosts the Annual Scholarship Awards Ceremony to showcase these awards, celebrate the excellent performance of our students, and express gratitude to our funders and the community of academics who work tirelessly to assist our students to achieve such high levels of performance in their study programmes. Society has changed dramatically in the recent past. The losses of jobs have led to the escalation of hardships such as poverty, ill-health, criminality, and inequality. Scholarships and merit awards are increasingly cognisant of these new realities and require students to also demonstrate social responsiveness through community engagement and entrepreneurship projects. This celebration is therefore also intended to develop and grow an institutional culture of excellence and nation-building through hard work, community engagement, entrepreneurship, and outreach. The education and training that will liberate and decolonise the mind of youth can therefore no longer rest only on theoretical underpinnings without the practical, innovative, social and entrepreneurial productive enterprise. In light of the invasion of our professional and service market places by the technology-driven Fourth and Fifth Industrial Revolution, the excellence displayed by our young people must increasingly project a social justice dividend for communities, from new and emerging technologies that are fuelling the revolution. Behavioral, technological and entrepreneurial skills of the future must be infused in the student educated today an average of three to five years ahead of their workplace debut so that they are able to reach the professional and service workplaces with the right skills and mindset.

The total investment in student financial support through scholarships in 2019 was in excess of R100 034 563, with a total of 4 670 students receiving awards. As we celebrate staff, students, funders, and community, we have an overwhelming reason to celebrate UKZN as a Premier University of African Scholarship for Inspiring Greatness through scholarships.

Professor Sandile P Songca
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning
On Friday, 23 August UKZN held its annual Scholarships Awards Ceremony 2019 where prestigious scholarship awards were conferred to deserving students who had displayed excellence in academics and sports.

While the year 2019 will see UKZN award scholarships in excess of R100 034 563 to 4 670 students, 140 of those scholarships were conferred at the Scholarships Awards Ceremony which is mainly reserved for those scholarship awards that are prestigious.

‘Not too long ago I was sitting in one of those chairs,’ said Mrs Victoria Ngwenya, Standard Bank Regional Head: RBB in reference to students who were just about to receive their awards while delivering the keynote speech. With today's world and industry being fast paced and ever-changing,
Ngwenya urged the students to be free thinking and to be courageous. ‘Tonight we celebrate all you’ve achieved. We are living in the age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Change is everywhere and students must be equipped to be able to compete. This is necessary now more than ever before (as) students of this generation are applying for jobs that don’t yet exist. Allow yourselves room to grow and that includes embracing failure for how it sets you up and prepares you for success. Courage is not the absence of fear but conquering that fear. Remember to always be brave, bold and courageous,’ she said.

Professor Sandile Songca, UKZN Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, also echoed Ngwenya’s sentiments, saying that the education and training that will liberate and decolonise the minds of youth can no longer only rest on theoretical underpinnings without the practical, innovative, social and entrepreneurial productive enterprise. ‘In light of the invasion of our professional and service market places by the technology-driven Fourth and Fifth industrial revolution, the excellence displayed by our young people must increasingly project a social justice dividend for communities, from new and emerging technologies that are fuelling the revolution. For the student educated today to reach the professional and service workplaces with the right skills and mind-sets; behavioural, technological and entrepreneurial skills of the future must be infused today an average of three to five years ahead of their workplace debut,’ he said.

‘The event also celebrates the courageousness of the University of KwaZulu-Natal in continuing to allow for increasing investment from its own resources to support the Scholarship Fund in the background of declining incomes and escalating financial constraints. It entrenches the great contribution of the scholarships towards the positioning of the University among the top universities in South Africa, southern Africa, the African continent, and the world. Through this event, the University inspires greatness among students, staff, alumni, and communities,’ he said.

Words: Sinegugu Ndlovu

UKZN members of executive management, staff and guests at the 2019 Scholarship awards event.
While the year 2019 saw UKZN award scholarships in excess of R100 034 563 to 4,670 students, 140 of those scholarships were conferred at the Scholarships Awards Ceremony mainly reserved for those scholarship awards that are prestigious.

Here’s a look at those prestigious scholarship awards in numbers:
1. Mandela Rhodes Scholarship for Burundi-Born Masters Candidate
2. Prestigious Award for Astrophysicist’s Masters Thesis
3. Scholarship for Pure Mathematics Masters Student
4. Hard Work and Dedication Reap Reward
Burundian, Mr Kevin Kantize, a master’s candidate in the School of Chemistry and Physics, was awarded a Mandela Rhodes Scholarship.

The Scholarships seek to build exceptional leadership in Africa and recognise scholars who demonstrate leadership and integrity; value education and the creation of opportunities for others; are entrepreneurial and innovative; and who promote reconciliation, freedom, peace and prosperity for all.

Kantize said being a recipient of a Mandela Rhodes Scholarship was an honour and a privilege. ‘I hope to inspire the youth to be more involved and take responsibility for the future we want. We can’t afford to escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.’

Kantize is currently conducting research based on electrochemical detection of water pollutants using metallophthalocyanines-based chemically modified electrodes. He plans to use the knowledge gained from his research to help develop advanced analytical techniques that will detect lower concentrations of hazardous chemicals in water bodies as well as water remediation techniques to provide access to potable water.

He aims to develop functional electrochemical sensors that are more sensitive and selective towards specific analytes, and more cost-effective than existing analytical techniques.

Kantize demonstrated his intellect and determination when he graduated with his BSc in Chemistry and Chemical Technology and his Honours in Chemistry cum laude despite facing challenges that included a daily 8km walk to campus and learning a new language. His early dreams of becoming a medical doctor led him to study Chemistry, a subject he
excelled at. He values the subject for its ability to explain why things happen the way that they do.

Kantize was consistently top of his class, receiving scholarships and awards that enabled him to further his studies.

His contributions are not just in the academic sphere. He is the Secretary General of the Burundian Refugee Community in Pietermaritzburg, where he is involved in the youth development programme and oversees various community projects.

‘I saw that there was a need for someone to get involved and contribute in one way or the other,’ he said. ‘This organisation is important because as the Burundian community in particular, we face challenges and it is always good when people put their minds together to try and help one another.’

Kantize dedicated his scholarship to his uncle, Mr Ernest Nkunzimana, who died in April this year.

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Words: Christine Cuénod
Photograph: Rajesh Jantilal
The thesis Ms Chevarra Hansraj presented for her master’s degree has been selected as the best in the area of Sciences and Applied Sciences at UKZN in 2018, winning her an award from the SA Association for the Advancement of Science.

The Association presents only one such award – the S2A3 medal – to each university in South Africa every year.

Hansraj, whose father Professor Sudan Hansraj is a mathematician at UKZN, matriculated at Eden College in Durban with eight As.

Her natural curiosity about the universe led her to UKZN which houses the world-class Astrophysics and Cosmology Research Unit (ACRU).

Her passion for Astrophysics shone through during her studies which earned her Bachelor of Science and Honours degrees, as well as a Masters in Applied Mathematics summa cum laude.

Hansraj is now registered for a PhD in Astrophysics focusing on Applied Mathematics.

On her achievement of the S2A3 medal, she said: ‘I will continue to view it as a physical reminder that hard work always pays off. This encouragement will translate into me being motivated to keep giving of my best as a young researcher. Seeing my supervisors and family so happy for me is a great bonus.’
She plans to focus her research in Relativistic Astrophysics – the understanding of the fundamental mathematical structure of curved space time.

She thanked UKZN for providing a conducive environment to conduct research and also two of her supervisors, Professor Sunil Maharaj and Professor Rituparno Goswami, who provided valuable guidance; mentoring and encouragement throughout her studies.

‘I also thank the South African Association for the Advancement of Science for the initiative of rewarding young researchers, and my loving family for the support. Their belief in me motivates me to give of my best every day.’

Said her father Professor Hansraj: ‘Chevarra is a motivated and focused student. She has drawn considerable inspiration from her supervisors who are world-class in the field of general relativity and gravitation. With their continued guidance and direction I am confident she will be able to make a decided contribution to science. It is also pleasing that she has a commitment to teaching other students advanced topics,’ he said.

Words: Leena Rajpal
Photograph: Rajesh Jantilal
Masters in Mathematics candidate, Mr Ntokozo Khuzwayo, received a Talent Equity and Excellence Acceleration Scholarship awarded to Black South African students who achieve academic excellence and aim to follow a career in academia.

The prestigious award, funded by UKZN, enables the University to grow the next generation of academics.

Khuzwayo, the only South African student on the Pietermaritzburg campus to have registered for a Masters in Pure Mathematics, graduated summa cum laude with
an Honours degree in Mathematics during the April 2019 Graduation ceremonies; at the same time, receiving the Hanno Rund Mathematics Award for the Best Honours Project in Pure Mathematics.

His masters research is focused on differential geometry, involving the study of the geometry of curves, surfaces and manifolds. ‘I study the geometry of manifolds called the Kähler manifolds, a special type of complex manifold;’ he said. ‘I intend to determine the relationship between locally conformal Kähler structures and Kähler structures, as these have important applications in classical mechanics.’

Khuzwayo chose this field because of its abstract nature and its applicability to other fields including general relativity. ‘By doing research in this field, I am positive that my work will be used someday to solve real life problems;’ he said.

Khuzwayo grew up in the village of KwaKhoza in Eshowe where he attended Imfihlo Primary School and Phindulimi High School, being raised by his grandmother while his parents were away working. He chose to study at UKZN because of its good reputation in teaching and research.

He said receiving the Talent Equity and Excellence Acceleration Scholarship was a great honour and would make it possible for him to help increase the number of mathematicians in South Africa.

‘I enjoy making a lifelong impact on other people’s lives. I hope to be one of the world’s best mathematicians.’

Khuzwayo aims to be a source of inspiration to students attending disadvantaged high schools, and plans to encourage them to work hard, believe in themselves and to consider mathematics as a career choice.

Khuzwayo thanked his supervisor, Professor Fortuné Massamba, for his guidance and for being available whenever he needed him. He also thanked his parents for their support as well as his primary and high school teachers for being a source of inspiration.

He acknowledged the support of postgraduate colleagues he shares an office with, especially Mr Tebogo Kgothi and Mr Mohamed Hamed.

While his studies are hectic, when he does have a gap, Khuzwayo attends church or plays chess.

Words: Christine Cuenod
Photograph: Rajesh Jantilal
Bachelor of Science graduate, Ms Stephanie Fraser, who is now studying for her honours degree, was awarded the Maryam Babangida Scholarship for the best female student proceeding from undergraduate to honours study at UKZN.

The award, from an anonymous Nigerian donor, honours Dr Maryam Babangida who contributed to the improvement of living conditions of Nigerian women.

Fraser excelled in Maths and Science while at Northlands High School in Durban and continued that success at UKZN where she completed her BSc degree and is now reading for a BSc Honours in Chemistry.

She sees the scholarship as recognition of all the hard work she has put in over the past three years which she will continue with in her pursuit of a master’s degree. Her ultimate goal is to get involved in projects that push the boundaries of knowledge for the benefit of society and the world.

At UKZN, I have been mentored by top-quality academics who conduct research of an international standard,’ said Fraser. ‘The insight I have gained from them is invaluable. I have also been inspired by the commitment the University makes to engage in projects that promote social upliftment and give back to the community. I feel very proud to be a part of an institution that honours its responsibility to bridge the socio-economic divide and strives to provide an education to all those who are deserving.’

Ms S Byrne, an English teacher at Northlands Girls’ High, said Fraser was good-natured and self-disciplined with a respectful attitude. ‘She is an excellent ambassador for the school through her personal and academic achievements and was highly popular among her peers.'
and educators. It was always an absolute pleasure to teach a learner of her calibre,’ she said.

Professor Neil Koorbanally of the School of Chemistry and Physics at UKZN said: ‘Ms Stephanie Fraser has been an exemplary student throughout her studies at UKZN. She is an amazing chemist. Her hard work and dedication have developed her into a truly remarkable scientist who we are proud of. She will definitely be one of the leaders of our society.’

Her proud parents, Drs David and Leigh-Anne Fraser, who are also UKZN alumni, said: ‘Stephanie has always thrown herself fully into whatever she’s undertaken, whether it be her academics, music, sports or spiritual life – she’s a real polymath. She is acutely aware that with every blessing and gift, like her scholarship, comes a responsibility to give back to others. Stephanie is unassuming and reserved and deeply self-critical with a wickedly dry sense of humour. Her scholarship is a great source of pride, and something that encouraged her to stretch herself to live up to its high standards. We’re very proud of our daughter!’

Words: Leena Rajpal
Photograph: Supplied
1. Sport Science Student Receives Scholarship
2. Meet the 2019 Abe Bailey Travel Bursary Recipient
3. Physiology Student Receives Malegapuru W Makgoba Scholarship
4. 50th Anniversary Endowment Fund Scholarship for Outstanding Academic Achievement
SPORT SCIENCE STUDENT RECEIVES SCHOLARSHIP

‘I feel very honoured and privileged to have the opportunity to study further in a field I am so passionate about,’ said Ms Sange Matebese, recipient of a UKZN Prestige Sports Scholarship.

Matebese plays touch rugby for the KZN U19 Girls team as well as the KZN Ladies team. She has also represented South Africa, playing for the SA U18 Ladies team.

‘My family is very proud of my achievement and are very grateful. We thank the funders for their generosity,’ she added.

Her future plans include establishing her own fitness and body conditioning company to train and groom young athletes. ‘I would also like to continue my work as a coach and start academies where I can develop touch rugby in KwaZulu-Natal.’

Her love for the sport keeps her going. ‘In my mind no dream is too small. All you need is a good work ethic, determination, focus and drive.’

She advised her fellow students not just to wish for things, but to go out and get what they want in life: ‘Everything we need to get ahead is at our disposal, we just need to make good use of the tools we are given.’

Matebese is also a stage performer and has appeared in 12 musicals in the past five-years. She lives with her parents and younger brother who recently started to play touch rugby and is now also playing for KwaZulu-Natal. ‘We are a very tight knit family who do almost everything together,’ she said.

Words: Nombuso Dlamini
Photograph: Supplied
Fifth-year Medical student, Mr Kapil Narain, has been awarded the Abe Bailey travel Bursary which will enable him to hone his skills overseas.

He hopes to use this opportunity to access international platforms and initiatives to boost his involvement in medical research as well as combat social injustices such as gender-based violence, poverty and the stigma associated with mental ill-health, HIV and TB.

‘I thank the funders, firstly, for recognising my achievements in academia, leadership and community initiatives and secondly, for providing a once in a lifetime opportunity which will expand my horizons. I pray that the funders will continue with the sponsorship of other aspiring and deserving students,’ said Narain.

Narain looks forward to furthering his studies in internal medicine and global health. He is passionate about medical research and its potential to positively impact millions of lives. He is also committed to human and animal rights and is involved in Amnesty International at the Medical School and in Greenpeace (Durban).

According to the Abe Bailey Trust website, ‘The focus of the bursary is leadership development and the Trustees wish the bursaries to be awarded to students who are academically strong and have shown exceptional qualities of leadership and service, with a good track record - not only on their campus level but also in a wider community.’

Narain has served as National Chairperson of the South African Medical Students’ Association (SAMSA), a non-profit organisation which aims to represent all Medical students in South Africa and contribute positively to healthcare. He is also a member of the International Federation of Medical Student’s Associations which has allowed him to attend the World Health Assembly and the South African Association of Health Educationalists conference.

He will kick-start his travels with a four-week leadership and cultural tour, starting in Cape Town with an orientation dinner, followed by a trip to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to experience the African Union, and to London, Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh in the United Kingdom.
Recipient of the Malegapuru W Makgoba Scholarship, Ms Emily Ruth Higgitt, was not expecting to receive a scholarship.

‘I never imagined that I would be in this position. I was not a top achiever at school. I always worked so hard, but it never amounted to anything like this,’ she said.

The scholarship is awarded to the five top-ranked undergraduates proceeding from first to second-year in each of UKZN’s four Colleges.

Higgitt said that she worked extremely hard last year as she was motivated by her new learning environment, ‘It was a new beginning in a new place, and I found that I enjoyed the work I was doing. This motivated me. To receive this award is recognition of all the effort and heart I put into my studies. I am very thankful to the University for this opportunity to continue my studies’, she said.

Her family is proud of her achievement. Her mother, Ruth said: ‘We are very thankful for this scholarship as it allows Emily to continue with her studies without financial worries.’

Higgitt chose to study physiology because she's passionate about understanding how and why things work the way they do. I also chose this degree because
I am interested in the workings of the brain and how the whole body functions as a unit.’

Her future plans include investigating neurological disorders such as depression, anxiety and Parkinson’s disease. ‘I would love to look into something like psychiatry. I am very interested in understanding how these disorders work and how they affect people. I’d like to find ways that can help people cope with them. I am especially interested in the effects of anxiety and depression and learning disorders on children. If this does not work out, I would like to pursue studies in microbiology. I never considered microbiology in the past but found last year that I really enjoy it and decided to make it my second major.’

Advising fellow students, she said: ‘Do your work with passion and understanding so that you retain the information and know how to apply it. This has been the key to my achievements.’

Higgitt comes from a close-knit family and lives with her mother and younger brother who is in Grade 9. She enjoys reading comics and doing art.

‘My mom and I are very close. We do a lot of things together. One of our more recent activities has been working with babies at a foster home near us,’ she said.

Words: Nombuso Dlamini
Photograph: Rajesh Jantilal
Bachelor of Pharmacy final-year student, Ms Fathima Rajah, is the recipient of the 50th Anniversary Endowment Fund Scholarship for outstanding academic achievement.

‘I feel overwhelmed, excited and emotional. This means so much. It proves that hard work is rewarded and I am very grateful that my efforts paid off,’ she said.

Rajah’s long-term plans include obtaining a master’s degree.

‘My goal in life is to make my parents proud. My religion helps me through times of difficulty and hardship. I have learnt that it is important to be patient and have faith that what is meant for me will come my way and hardships are only given to those who can bear them,’ she said.

Rajah’s advice to fellow students is that ‘diligence and consistency are the key to success.’

She thanked her family for their support throughout her academic career and added that ‘This scholarship reduces the financial stress on my parents.’

Added the eldest of four children, ‘My mum is the ultimate mother, cook, driver, nurse, therapist and friend. My dad works in the field of risk management and I hope to be as successful as he is one day. I am always learning from my family. I have them to thank for the morals and values they have instilled in me that helped me to become the best version of myself.’

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**Words:** Nombuso Dlamini  
**Photograph:** Rajesh Jantilal
1. Young Achiever Scoops Distinguished Student Award
2. Good Tidings Replace Bad Memories
3. College of Humanities Boasts Seven Denis Hurley Scholarship Achievers
4. MW Makgoba Scholarships for Five Humanities Students
YOUNG ACHIEVER SCOOPS DISTINGUISHED STUDENT AWARD

The league was started by a group of friends who identified challenges they had faced trying to navigate and access Higher Education,’ said Moodaley. ‘Being the first in a family to attend a post high school institution, cultural differences, accessing technology and the pressures from your own family were among the common factors identified by the group.’

Despite working after hours to arrange events and assist with a peer-to-peer learning programme on Saturday mornings, Moodaley and other YPL members still find time to mentor young high school and university students.

‘Staff at Umvuzo High School near Pietermaritzburg have also given us their full support in all our endeavours she said.

‘There is a collective desire among YPL members to see change coupled with action. This is why the money from my award will be going solely to this cause. We will investigate ways in which the financial contribution will serve the people of the community best – I am very excited about that.’

Moodaley hopes that the Young Professionals’ League will grow into a movement across KwaZulu-Natal and the rest of South Africa.

She thanked her colleagues and friends; educators and learners at Umvuzo High; as well as lecturers and students at DUT, UKZN and TVET colleges she works with for their support. She also thanked UKZN for the scholarship award.

Words: Melissa Mungroo
Photograph: Rajesh Jantilal

Education and Development student, Ms Natasha Moodaley, is the winner of the UKZN Distinguished Student Award which recognises and rewards outstanding academic achievement and excellence in community engagement.

‘The award is the result of collaborative work with colleagues and a desire to change lives for the better,’ said Moodaley, who graduated summa cum laude with an Honours degree in Education and Development which she believes is due to the collaborative learning approach used by UKZN lecturer, Ms Jane Quin.

In terms of her contribution to the community, Moodaley is currently a fully involved member of the Young Professionals’ League (YPL) – an initiative she helped establish. The YPL is geared towards supporting students and learners in their studies and goals through the development of hard and soft skills.
Humanities student, Ms Yanelisa Mbana, has bad memories of struggling to pay her fees and an illness which forced her to stop her studies temporarily.

However, those painful memories were washed away by the exciting news that she has been awarded a 50th Anniversary UKZN Scholarship for her outstanding academic performance.

‘When I became sick, it was difficult for me to balance my health with study demands. I had to stop my studies but was determined not to give in,’ said Mbana. ‘I eventually got better and started all over again, managing to achieve way beyond my expectations.’

Mbana says the scholarship is a stepping stone to greater opportunities. Her goal is to maintain a good academic record while working towards her honours degree next year in Linguistics. ‘I am interested in doing in-depth research in my field with the goal of having completed my masters five years from now. The field of linguistics has a wide reach and I am especially interested in its potential for bettering our education sector.’

Mbana thanked the funders of the scholarship. ‘My grandmother was so happy when I told her that I had received a scholarship from UKZN. She can now rest easy knowing there is a way forward for me.’

Mbana says scholarships simplify life for students. ‘They encourage us to do our best. The recognition, over and above the monetary reward, make the hard work and perseverance worth it,’ she said.

*Words:* Melissa Mungroo  
*Photograph:* Rajesh Jantilal
The Archbishop Denis Hurley Scholarship – dedicated to candidates who are disadvantaged but academically excellent – has been awarded to seven students at UKZN’s College of Humanities.

Recipients are Mr Simo Cele, Ms Caitlin de Waal, Ms Phakamile Mazibuko, Ms Khulelaphi Mdluli, Ms Catherine Muyonjo, Ms Nothando Pahla and Mr Shaylen Naidoo.

All the students, many of whom had been struggling with financial difficulties, were thrilled to hear they were scholarship winners.

The scholarship is a dream come true for Muyonjo who is a teacher. ‘I was raised by a single mother and I am so glad that she no longer has to worry about my varsity fees. I have three sisters and we all depend on her. This is such a weight off our shoulders.’

Muyonjo battled depression and suffered discrimination from fellow students. ‘I was born in South Africa but my parents are from Uganda,’ she said. ‘I always felt that I did not belong and this upset me so much. In the house I was renting there were people who would not talk to me for
weeks. It was challenging but I knew my purpose and I did not let a negative atmosphere hinder my academic progress.’

Muyonjo is now part of the UMTAPO Student Movement which aims to educate the youth about social issues. She is also a member of the Golden Key International Society and is involved in charity work with St Anthony’s Church.

Naidoo says the scholarship assists with transformation, emancipation and empowerment. During his matric year at Apollo Secondary School in Chatsworth, his father died, resulting in financial difficulties for the family. Naidoo also had to cope with domestic violence and poverty in his neighbourhood.

He described his life as a student as bitter-sweet. He never had extra money to buy clothing and other accessories most other students had. He was once robbed of his cellphone, bag and watch while waiting for a bus. ‘My home was quite a distance from the bus route and I remember days in which I walked in torrential rain which damaged my course notes.’

Naidoo, who relied on the kindness of family and friends during his studies, plans to do his PhD in Transdisciplinarity and Integrative Social Science Education, aiming to one day lecture at the University.

Cele, a Port Shepstone resident, said studying without funding is highly stressful. ‘You don’t know whether you will make it through to the following year, you are stuck with the same diet for the rest of the year and you are just not at ease.’

The scholarship has freed Cele financially, allowing him to enjoy his studies and the experience of being a student. Armed with a passion for writing, Cele plans to delve into development studies, focusing on organisations driven by creating spaces for growth for South African communities. ‘I’m interested in coming up with ideas that are people centred – that will create employment, business opportunities and the personal development of individuals within society.’

De Waal, Education student, says the scholarship had assisted her financially. ‘I believe it will open many doors. Scholarships afford students of every background the opportunity to have hope, which is what a lot of young people lack today.’

De Waal is passionate about education and teaching. ‘Imparting knowledge to younger individuals has been a passion of mine from a young age. I believe it runs in my blood. I come from a very long line of teachers on both sides of my family. We call it the family business.’ She plans to follow in the footsteps of her family members, in addition to attaining a master’s and a PhD.

Mazibuko, also an Education student, sees herself free of the financial shackles linked to her studies and being an inspiration to her younger siblings to strive for excellence through hard work and determination. ‘To achieve and maintain excellence is not an easy task. It is a lonely, tiring and draining journey. However, the values of commitment, hard work and consistency have kept me going on good and bad days.’

She plans to complete her master’s and PhD degrees, eventually establishing the Phakamile Mazibuko Foundation which will collaborate with various organisations to develop broad community engagement projects to improve the lives of people, especially women in rural areas.
Mdluli says she will use the scholarship money to pay for her tuition and residence fees. ‘I come from an impoverished background. This scholarship has reduced my stress levels. I can now focus on improving academically and get my master’s and PhD.’

She thanked the scholarship donors and her family and friends for their support.

Words: Melissa Mungroo
Photographs: Rajesh Jantilal
Five top achievers from the College of Humanities – Ms Jadine Pillay, Ms Lindokuhle Mbatha, Ms Sabrina Loubser, Mr Darren Jantjies and Mr Ntuthuko Hlela – were awarded the prestigious Malegapuru W. Makgoba Scholarship.

The scholarship, named after Professor Malegapuru William Makgoba, the first Vice-Chancellor and Principal of UKZN, is awarded to five top first-year students from each of the four Colleges.

Hlela, who went to Umlazi Comprehensive Technical High school, is over the moon about receiving the scholarship. ‘My parents had to go to a loan shark for financial assistance to raise the cash for me to register and start my first year of study,’ said Hlela. ‘For the first four months, I helped them repay the loan, so as a result I was not able to buy the required textbooks for the first semester. Faith and a hunger for success helped me overcome these challenges,’
he said. Hlela thanked his parents for their support and said he plans to go through to do his doctorate.

Pillay of Chatsworth said she is grateful to the funders of the scholarship. ‘This scholarship has allowed me to focus fully on my studies free of the worry about tuition fees and is a clear indication of my hard work and efforts. It serves as a source of motivation to keep me striving for excellence.’

For Mbatha, the scholarship affords him financial and emotional freedom. ‘I’ve always seen UKZN as a prestigious institution, it’s always been a dream of mine to be here. To study at this University has been close to my heart for as long as I can remember, and getting a chance to do it and realising it’s the best choice I have ever made is the most exhilarating feeling.’

Said Loubser, who matriculated from Ashton International College in Ballito: ‘I am thrilled to be a scholarship winner and at UKZN where I am doing a degree concentrating on Politics, Philosophy and Economics.’

Jantjies, who attended Kloof High School, sees the scholarship as a huge achievement that will assist him while he is in Canada on an exchange programme later this year. ‘I now see that if I work hard enough, there are people that notice and are willing to invest in me. I plan to finish my degree and build a portfolio of works as a digital artist,’ he said.

Words: Melissa Mungroo
Photograph: Rajesh Jantilal
1. Sports Scholarship for Martial Arts and Cricket Star
2. Giving Up was Never an Option for Emma Smith Scholarship Recipient
3. Rick Turner Scholarship for Resilient Darlynn
4. Sky’s the Limit for PhD Student
SPORTS SCHOLARSHIP FOR MARTIAL ARTS AND CRICKET STAR

Martial arts and cricket star, Mr Tashen Sarju, secured a UKZN Sports Scholarship.

For BCom honours student, Mr Tashen Sarju, being awarded a UKZN Prestige Sports Scholarship means that he can further his studies and pursue his interest in karate, judo and cricket with fewer financial challenges.

‘Studying has always involved financial difficulties and receiving this scholarship will allow me to complete my Honours in Economics. I lost my dad in 2017 and it was hard to study but I had to ensure that I stayed on track and worked hard to obtain my degree,’ said Sarju.

The avid sportsman cites his best achievements as being awarded senior provincial colours for karate and judo, representing the province in the KwaZulu-Natal Inland senior provincial academy in cricket and representing UKZN in all three sports codes.

‘I got involved in karate and judo as my dad was involved in both of these martial arts. The highlight of my sporting career has been participating at the recent judo nationals in Vanderbiljpark. The KZN team that I was a part of was placed fourth in the tournament which had close to 20 teams. Balancing sport and studies is extremely challenging but these are things that I really enjoy doing so I always make time,’ said Sarju.

When he is not playing sports, Sarju tutors third-year Econometrics and explores his interest in how the economy works.

‘I’ve always wanted to work in the field of commerce and I hope to one day complete my PhD in Economics. I also want to become a Protea and join the working world next year,’ he said.

Words: Thandiwe Jumo
Photograph: Supplied
Master of Laws student, Ms Zinhle Koza, is the proud recipient of the Emma Smith Scholarship which will enable her to study abroad.

Koza, who received her LLB with 14 distinctions, said she faced many financial challenges during her studies, but was determined not to let this hinder her progress.

‘I am one of seven children and the first of my siblings to attend university. As the breadwinner, my older sister, Amanda (who was 26-years-old at the time) had to provide for our family and myself throughout my first-year,’ said Koza.

Despite being in constant fear of financial exclusion, she decided that she would overcome her dire circumstances by continually striving for academic excellence.

‘When I left home for university, I was aware of the sacrifices that my family was making. Fortunately, at the end of first-year, the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs awarded me a full bursary, which was instrumental in my completing my tertiary studies,’ said Koza.

Apart from her studies, the 23-year-old who hails from Magabheni, a small township in Umkomaas, is passionate about community outreach. She is the founder of the Zinhle Koza Foundation, a community development project established to uplift and empower marginalised communities, with an emphasis on the youth and women.

She is a Women of Fortitude Ambassador, a campaign that seeks to encourage the current generation of young South Africans to continue MaSisulu’s legacy of activism through 100 women ambassadors. This initiative aims to promote social cohesion and women empowerment and to recognise women across all sectors who have courageously and successfully broken barriers by contributing to building the South Africa envisaged in the country’s democratic Constitution. The #WomenofFortitude campaign uses stories of past and present heroines to inspire other women to take charge of their own development, and reignite passion in women to recommit themselves to the values and principles of MaSisulu.

Ms Zinhle Koza receiving her award from Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Professor Deresh Ramjugernath.
Koza is also the secretary of the Restoration of Hope organisation where her role involves regularly visiting high schools around Umlazi; informing and motivating students about the different issues they face and might encounter in life after matriculating. She is the former Mentorship Programme Co-ordinator for UKZN’s Students for Law and Social Justice.

‘Empowering women to reach their desired goals is mandatory and ensuring that my experience/expertise and knowledge are disseminated to serve a bigger purpose is paramount. The first step is working towards the Zinhle Koza Foundation achieving international status so that it can harness the necessary resources to impact women’s lives on a larger scale,’ she said.

With Constitutional Theory, Law and Litigation as her fields of interest, Koza is looking forward to using the scholarship to explore her passion for women empowerment.

‘My research is centred on gender and reparations for human rights violations in Africa. Reparations programmes that seek to provide for victims of gross and systematic human rights violations are becoming an increasingly frequent feature of transitional and post-conflict processes. Given that women represent a large proportion of the victims of these conflicts and experience conflict in a distinct manner, it’s crucial to examine whether such programmes can be designed to assert their rights more fairly and efficiently,’ she said.

**Words:** Thandiwe Jumo  
**Photograph:** Rajesh Jantilal
Recipient of the Rick Turner Scholarship, Ms Darlynn Mabunda grew up in a child-headed household and relied on partial bursary funding and the generosity of a donor to cover her living expenses while at university.

‘I had to look after my little brother and cousin from the age of 12 because our guardians lived in another province and would come home once a month to buy food for us and then go back to work,’ said the Master’s in Commerce student.

‘I am the first person to graduate in my family and coming from a disadvantaged background, I feel the need to push myself extra hard in order to provide better opportunities not only for those around me, but those to come,’ she added.

While the constant struggle to raise tuition fees and the burden of outstanding fees was not easy, dropping out was never an option for Mabunda.

‘Sometimes I would struggle to register because I still owed fees from the previous year. Paying rent was another challenge because my donor could only do so much and my UKZN bursaries did not cover everything. I overcame these hurdles by studying hard,’ she said.

As the recipient of a scholarship which recognises top achieving postgraduate students in the broad disciplines of Politics and Labour Studies who also exhibit a commitment to community engagement, Mabunda is dedicated to giving back to her hometown.

‘I come from Buyisonto, a small village in Bushbuckridge (Mpumalanga) where we had little resources. Hearing inspirational stories about the power of education from my primary and high school teachers empowered me to be the woman I am today. My high school friends and I established a programme to assist high school kids making the transition to university. We help them secure admission to a higher education institution after their matric. I look forward to the initiative having a greater impact in the future,’ she said.

Words: Thandiwe Jumo
Photograph: Rajesh Jantilal
Recipient of a UKZN Doctoral Research Scholarship, Mr Amil Nundkumar will be able to pursue his Doctorate in Administration without worrying about the costs of conducting his research.

The Scholarship is one of the University’s most prestigious awards for postgraduate students. Awarded from the institution’s own funds, it targets a maximum of four top PhD candidates.

‘After completing school, I chose not to attend university as I did not want to burden my parents financially but opted to undertake technical studies at a college. I am 51 and a late bloomer so this achievement will hopefully inspire the younger generation in my family,’ said Nundkumar.

A member of the management team at Elangeni TVET College in Pinetown, Nundkumar has been working and studying part-time for more than 25 years. He has witnessed the various developments in the South African public college sector.

‘Given my long career in the public service, I decided to pursue studies in public administration. This is topical given the ethical and service delivery challenges the country is currently facing. The Zondo Commission on State Capture highlights this issue. This scholarship will allow me to focus on my research without having to worry about financial constraints,’ he said.

With the avid support of his supervisor, Professor Mogie Subban, Nundkumar is looking forward to making the most of his PhD journey.

‘I plan on writing more journal articles with my academic mentor, Professor Subban who has been a driving force in my masters and doctoral journey. This qualification and future journal publications will contribute to further
discussions and possible improvement in TVET Colleges’ achievements. These colleges are regarded as the vehicle for skills development in South Africa and further research in this area will assist in enhancing their performance,’ he said.

Words: Thandiwe Jumo
Photograph: Rajesh Jantilal
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