

## THE LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARD GOES TO ...



Commitment to the development of small, medium and micro enterprises in Pietermaritzburg has resulted in Miss Diane Gaskin, the General Manager of the Business Support Centre, winning a Local Economic Development (LED) Champion Award initiated by UKZN's Graduate School of Business and Leadership.

Gaskin, who dedicated almost 10 years of her career towards entrepreneurship support and skilling of SMMEs in communities within Pietermaritzburg, was nominated for the LED award by an official in the Msunduzi Municipality.

For the past six years, Gaskin, under the auspices of the Business Support Centre, has focused on enterprise development by creating opportunities for micro businesses in corporate supply chain.

The LED Champs Project, a partnership between the GSB&L and the Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDT), awards 10 individuals within the province who have driven empowerment initiatives in entrepreneurship, micro and small business and community development.

'This is an exciting opportunity. I think if this programme follows through, and I know it will, it will make an impact on local economic development in the rest of the province, more so because it's working with people on the ground,' said Gaskin.

According to Gaskin, a challenge facing local economic development in the province is the lack of an effective support mechanism to help in the growth and sustainability of SMMEs. 'We ignore the growth potential of SMMEs already in business and focus on start-ups. Government

agencies help by providing business plans for start-ups, but they don't really assist with implementation.'

Gaskin believes agencies or initiatives focusing on the growth potential of SMMEs already in business would overcome this challenge.

She said many sectors focused on their own projects and did not explore collaborative ventures that could assist in local economic development.

She said initiatives targeting SMME development should not be mass events comprising hundreds of businesses, but rather smaller gatherings that make a better impact.

Gaskin found the recent workshop LED Champs attended, enlightening as recipients got a better understanding of each other's projects and shared ideas on empowerment.

She looked forward to engaging with UKZN researchers who had expressed an interest in linkages with her organisation.

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## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS DISCUSSED AT BUSINESS SCHOOL**



Training and development needs in the Pietermaritzburg area were discussed at a breakfast for local business leaders hosted recently by the Graduate School of Business and Leadership (GSB&L).

The Dean and Head of the GSB&L, Professor Stephen Migiro, and other academics engaged with directors, human resource managers and representatives from the Pietermaritzburg Chamber

of Business to establish the training and development needs of the business sector in Pietermaritzburg.

The breakfast provided an ideal opportunity for both business and academia to forge mutually beneficial partnerships.

Addressing guests, Migiro said: ‘We at the GSB&L are in the business of training managers and leaders and therefore it’s imperative to create a symbiotic partnership with the business sector. Partnering with the business sector is advantageous for the School whose training needs will be supplemented by tapping into the practical skills business offers,’ said Migiro.

Business representatives pointed out where the GSB&L could assist in the training needs of their companies.

Representatives of technically orientated businesses said supervisory training was needed for personnel who had moved up the ranks and were now in managerial positions.

Technical businesses present also identified the need for the GSB&L to develop short courses for support staff who lacked technical knowledge relevant to the industries in which they worked.

Representatives said there was also a need for trade union members to be put through courses on management practice to enable them to better understand issues from a managerial perspective.

Improvements in workforce planning was another training area business identified.

Guests suggested that business should revisit its approach to identifying talented young people at schools and invest in developing learners with the potential to succeed in a career in business at an earlier age. Funding a matriculant’s tertiary education by offering a bursary was insufficient.

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**PROFESSOR KRIBEN PILLAY MEMBER OF EXCLUSIVE ENTERTAINERS’ SOCIETY**



Professor Kriben Pillay, Dean of Teaching and Learning in the College of Law and Management Studies, has become the first South African to be given full membership of Psycrets: The British Society of Mystery Entertainers.

Founded by the noted mystery entertainer, Professor Todd Landman, who is Professor of Government and Director of the Institute for Democracy and Conflict Resolution at the University of Essex, Psycrets' membership is drawn from a wide range of professional and semi-professional mystery entertainers.

In a recent letter to Pillay, Landman said:

‘The Committee of Psycrets was particularly impressed with your application for membership. While our membership includes full-time working professionals, we also have a wide range of performers who combine the art of Mentalism with other areas of professional practice. The Committee was impressed with the ways in which you use Mentalism to explore and illustrate your work on consciousness.

‘Your work has enjoyed added value after being accepted into the archives of the Magic Circle. We see as cutting edge the kind of the work in which you are engaged, and we encourage you to share your insights with the organisation.

‘You may also like to submit an article for consideration in the new Journal of Performance Magic at the University of Huddersfield. We are pleased to have you amongst us.’

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**MBA STUDENT APPOINTED TO THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**



A Masters in Business Administration (MBA) student in the Graduate School of Business and Leadership (GSB&L), Ms Suraya Dawad, has clinched a senior managerial position with the National Planning Commission (NPC) in the Office of the President.

Formerly from Overport in Durban, Dawad took on the responsibilities of Research Manager in the Programme to Support Pro-Poor Policy Development in South Africa (PSPPD) this month.

The National Planning Commission headed by Minister in the Presidency, Mr Trevor Manuel, is mandated to create a plan of action to achieve South Africa's development objectives.

In response to her appointment, Dawad said: 'We all have aspirations and goals in life. My interest lies in development issues in the South African context. I have contributed towards development through my previous positions, however on a smaller scale. This position in the NPC will afford me the opportunity to contribute, to a larger extent, towards South Africa's development. The National Development Plan (NDP) is a document produced with a great deal of thought and I'm excited to be a part of its implementation.'

Dawad holds a Bachelor of Psychology degree (including Honours in Psychology) and a Masters in Population Studies, from the former University of Natal. She is a final year MBA student at UKZN who has set her sights on graduating *cum laude*, and is close to achieving her goal after passing 15 courses with distinctions thus far.

For her master's research dissertation, Dawad intends exploring an employee assistance programme, focusing on its utilisation by employees, as well as reasons for non-utilisation.

Taking on the MBA challenge stems from her need to "marry" her research experience with management. Dawad says the postgraduate programme has assisted her put the theory she has learnt into practice. She said studying the MBA courses had helped her manage projects more effectively and efficiently.

‘The MBA has been a challenge but a great learning curve. It’s now a little more challenging being away from Durban but I am taking it in my stride. I have written a thesis previously and I can do it again with proper time management and determination,’ said Dawad.

Dawad, who served as project leader and senior scientist at the HIV Prevention Research Unit at the South African Medical Research Council prior to her current appointment, has published her research in several peer-reviewed journals including: *Rural and Remote Health*, *African Journal of AIDS Research*, and *Health Research Policies and Systems*.

As Research Manager at the NPC, Dawad’s role entails managing the research process of programmes aimed at supporting pro-poor development. Two critical areas of her job are managing grant making processes and managing relations with stakeholders.

Two weeks into her appointment, Dawad is often asked if she has met the President – not yet she says but in time she hopes this will happen. She looks forward to working in an office headed by Manuel.

Professor Anesh Singh, an academic in the GSB&L who is Dawad’s Supervisor and Lecturer, described her as a very “focused” student who has set high academic and professional goals for herself.

‘When she joined my research methodology class last year she made it very clear from the outset that she wanted to do extremely well in my course, which she did. It was a proud moment for me when she informed me that she would be joining the President’s office.’

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