

Failure is not an option!

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THIS WAS THE message of one of the final-year students at the Hundred for Hundred award function hosted by SAICE at SAICE House in Midrand on 16 November 2007.

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In line with SAICE centenary in 2003, the project aimed to recruit a hundred students from disadvantaged backgrounds into civil engineering studies.

Despite financial constraints, the project has not only survived – thanks to Jones & Wagener Consulting Engineers – but has managed to identify and keep what seems to be future jewels in civil engineering in South Africa! For example, a final-year civil engineering student at the University of Johannesburg, Thandiwe Ngwenya, did not fail one course during her four-year studies and has accumulated 14 distinctions.

The new partnership with the Thuthuka Project is set to take the H4H project to the next level.

Thuthuka is a project that has as its prime objective the increase of the number of black chartered accountants in South Africa. The project was launched in 2002 in partnership with the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) and the University of Johannesburg. Its sponsors include SAICA and the National Skills Fund.

Currently there are 560 students in this programme, 16 of whom are post-graduate.

One of the Thuthuka sponsors offered a helping hand to H4H by awarding ten civil engineering bursaries. Along with

ten bursaries, Thuthuka brought along their ‘whatever it takes to polish the identified jewels’ policy, which is passionately promoted by Thuthuka’s Natalie Zimelmann (director) and Ethel Nhlapho (manager).

Fruits of this were evidenced by three Thuthuka engineering students who scooped achievement awards in their first year of study.

Another partnership in the pipeline is with TCTA, a state-owned entity whose mission is to fund and implement bulk raw water infrastructure – hence their interest in civil engineers.

TCTA is coming in with a ‘ten in, ten out’ policy to be implemented on civil engineering students they will be supporting in the next few years.

With such partnerships H4H does not have an option to fail but to soar higher and higher!

The function was attended by the heads of civil engineering department from the University of Pretoria and the University of Johannesburg, as well as representatives from the Gauteng Department of Education, Goba, Jones & Wagener, TCTA and Thuthuka.

The SAICE president for 2008, Johan de Koker, delivered an address on the importance of professional development for young civil engineers through SAICE membership.

Forty students who took time off their exams to attend the function had their afternoon well spent. They networked with sponsors and university lecturers, and were also inspired by young practising civil engineers Jabulile Sibanyoni and Winston Nxumalo. The cherry on the top was twenty awards for student achievers.

Thanks to Goba, Jones & Wagener, TCTA, Thuthuka and SAICE, who made this function a success! ■