

Quality and quantity win top award for NMU student

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He is not top of the class, he is top of the country.

A young Uitenhage man is in high spirits as he starts a job hunt in the hope of becoming a professional quantity surveyor, after he was named recently as the top BSc quantity surveying undergraduate in SA.

Initially uncertain of his chosen career path, Nelson Mandela University honours student Mylan Jonas, 22, is no longer in doubt after being honoured with the award by the Association of South African Quantity Surveyors.

His illustrious track record saw him being nominated by NMU in the prestigious category of the Future Leader Award.

The annual awards on Monday were part of the 2018 South African Council for the Quantity Surveying Profession's international research conference held in Rosebank, Johannesburg, where public works minister Thulas Nxesi presented the awards to the recipients.

NMU head of department for quantity surveying Roy Cumberlege said Jonas's academic record was phenomenal.

The quantity surveyors association's administrator and conference co-ordinator, On-thatile Nkobeni, said Jonas was pitted against the top-quantity surveying undergraduate students from 14 SA universities.

Jonas said he was surprised by the award as he already felt a sense of accomplishment through NMU's nomination.

He also received a R10,000 cash prize, but said the exposure mattered most.

"All the exposure to some of the biggest names and companies in the construction industry is immeasurable.

"And I am looking for a job in order to qualify to complete professional registration with the [council for the quantity surveying profession].

"So winning this award will help," he said.

"Initially I didn't even know what a tender document was, never mind all the quantity surveying terms and elements because I was never exposed to construction in my life.

"But I opted to do quantity surveying because it included maths and commerce, which I enjoy.

"And I found the key to my success was to stay in your own lane and do your own race and pace – just doing my best.

"I had to sacrifice a lot to understand and excel in the profession. But I believe in keeping a balanced life, otherwise you will lose yourself."

Asked why he had opted to stay in the course despite his initial hesitation, Jonas said: "The satisfaction you feel when a project you worked on comes together is unreal. Knowing a



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physical building and saying 'I helped make that'.

"But I always joke with my parents, saying I need to get a job first to leave a legacy."

Cumberlege said NMU had a proud history with the quantity surveyors association's awards and this year's 10th anniversary was no exception.

Over the last four years, the NMU department of quantity surveying has scooped 14 of the 15 total prizes in the research outputs categories.

However, Jonas is the institution's first winner of the Future Leader Award.

NMU honours students of the quantity surveying department scooped all the research awards at this year's awards.

Kundani Maboho received the award for the best youth presentation and the award for the best overall contribution to the profession.

Sanelisiwe Mdubo received the award for the best written academic paper, while Candice Hempel was the second runner-up for the Gold Medal Award of the association.