



EDU fulfils students' dreams

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The winning team: Daniel Munene, academic development co-ordinator, Nkgopoleng Moloi, Ashiq Parker, both students of the year, and June Pym, EDU director, at the unit's award ceremony.

Emotions ran high when the Education Development Unit in the Faculty of Commerce hosted its annual awards ceremony on 29 July, providing a testimony to what the programme had achieved in its 10 years.

Speaker after speaker, from former and current students to administrators, hailed the programme as a living example of what UCT strives for - to attract and retain students who have experienced gaps and disparities in education and life.

Like alumnus Phathiswa Mdladla, whose story of overcoming life in a squatter camp, pregnancy, the stress of her mother's sickness, and finally graduation, reduced some students to tears.

"If it was not because of EDU, I don't know where I would be today," she said. The unit was established in 2000 by the Faculty of Commerce, and is home to the Academic Development's BCom and BBusSc programmes. It offers a variety of education initiatives, including tutor training, formative evaluation of students' learning experiences, passing on a range of relevant skills, and developing multiple forums to facilitate a supportive and reflective learning environment.

As Ashiq Parker, who won this year's EDU Student of the Year Award along with Nkgopoleng Moloi, puts it, the programme has made students believe in themselves and encouraged them to achieve what would otherwise have been impossible. Parker has improved his mathematics mark at university compared to high school.

"The EDU staff are patient and tolerant," he explained. "They are a 'go-to place' with their open-door policy, and that inspired me."

Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo, deputy vice-chancellor, said the university is proud of the unit as it is a model of where UCT wants to be in five years through its strategic goals.

Through the event, the unit celebrated academic excellence and talent, like dance and singing of its students, by awarding them various accolades.
