

NEWS RELEASE

Three-time UP graduate aces master's with distinction



Kudos to UP graduate and junior mining engineer Divine Ile, whose master's thesis earned her a distinction

University of Pretoria (UP) graduate Divine Ile couldn't be more thrilled to have obtained a master's degree in Mining Engineering with distinction.

"When I found out that I'd passed, it felt like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders," she says. "The waiting period after submitting my final work was nerve-racking, but once my supervisor notified me that I had passed, and with distinction, I was elated."

Ile graduated from UP with a Bachelor of Engineering in Mining in 2019 and completed her honours in the subject, also at UP, in 2020. Her thesis is an investigation into the use of backfill to reinforce pillars in hard rock bord (rock that requires a lot of energy to be broken) and pillar layouts.

"I was interested in this topic because of my supervisor, Professor Francois Malan," says the Pretoria-born junior mining engineer who works at a consulting company in Centurion. "I have known him since my third year as an undergraduate, and he inspired my interest in rock engineering. I wanted to focus on a subject that

would not only explore rock engineering, but also look into the possibility of reducing the risk of environmental damage – which mining is typically associated with – through backfilling.”

She says her thesis required a lot of research into how backfilling is done in different countries, as it is not very prominent locally, adding that the various methods being employed could be altered to better suit the South African environment.

Ile credits the education she received at UP as top-notch.

“Tuks is rated as one of the top universities in Africa. Having degrees from the university broadens my horizons. I do not feel limited to South Africa alone when it comes to the trajectory of my career.”

Her parents, she explains, have always been vocal about the importance of studying, especially for a young woman.

“Pursuing my master’s felt like a natural step in my journey after I’d completed honours,” Ile says. “Education has played a vital role in the woman that I’ve become. I’ve acquired knowledge in my years at university that has altered the way I view and navigate my way through the world. I could never take my education for granted.”

For Ile, the memory she recalls most fondly while at UP was strolling through campus with her friends and stopping at Coffee Buzz for hazelnut cake, which they enjoyed on the Aula lawn.

Ile hopes to make great strides in her career in the coming years and be registered as a professional engineer. Unsurprisingly, pursuing a PhD at UP might also be on the cards.

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ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa, with its administration offices located on its Hatfield Campus in Pretoria. This 115-year-old institution is also one of the largest producers of research in South Africa.

Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). It is the only university in the country with a Faculty of Veterinary Science, which is ranked the best in Africa. UP has 120 academic departments and 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 56 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes. It has the most academic staff with PhDs (70%), NRF-rated researchers (613).

The 2024 Times Higher Education subject rankings placed UP first in South Africa in the fields of Law, Veterinary Science, Accounting and Finance; Agriculture and Forestry and Electrical and Electronic Engineering. Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranked the University among the top five in Africa, as part of their 2024 World University Rankings (WUR). UP was the only South African university featured in the 2023 World University Rankings for Innovation (WURI), falling within in the 101-200 range of innovative universities.

For more information, please go to www.up.ac.za