



Communication and Marketing Department
Isebe loThungelwano neNtengiso
Kommunikasie en Bemerkingsdepartement

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa
Welgelegen House, Chapel Road Extension, Rosebank, Cape Town
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 5427/5428/5674 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 5628

www.uct.ac.za

26 September 2023

UCT medical student's stellar academic record paves way for elective abroad



Moses Malebana

Photo: Supplied

Fifth-year Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBChB) student Moses Malebana's stellar academic record has paved the way for a special international elective at the University of Graz, making him the maiden recipient of this golden opportunity, and galvanising ties between the University of Cape Town's (UCT) Department of Medicine and the Medical University of Graz (Med Uni Graz) in Austria.

Malebana will depart in November and return to UCT's Faculty of Health Sciences in January 2024. And with just a few short weeks before he boards his flight, he said he is excited for what awaits, and plans to absorb every detail of the experience.

"I plan on becoming a giant sponge while there. I am excited and feel privileged that I've been selected for this opportunity. I look forward to learning all there is to learn and flying UCT's and the Department of Medicine's flags high at Med Uni Graz," he said.

Tough grind

But this opportunity didn't just fall into his lap. To be considered for the elective abroad, the application and selection criteria was clear – the candidate needed to prove an unmatched academic record. Each applicant was also tasked with supplying a motivational letter that highlighted why they felt they deserved the opportunity. It's safe to say that Malebana passed the test with flying colours.

He said he used the motivational letter to reflect and relay personal anecdotes that focused on the sacrifices that led him to study medicine at UCT, and he enjoyed documenting his story.

"I remember seeing the email and thinking that this is my opportunity to reflect on my journey and to just tell my story. It was interesting because I don't often reflect on things. But when I started, I realised that my whole life up to this point was about making the most of the opportunities that have come my way," he said.

First-class motivation

In his motivation, Malebana touched on the events in his life that moulded him into the man he is today. And the list is endless – walking for more than an hour to and from school every day in rural Limpopo, contending with a lack of in-school resources, and a shortage of skilled teachers were just some of the challenges he experienced. These hurdles, he added, provided the impetus he needed to give his high school education and his medical studies his all.

"All of this taught me resilience; it motivated me to work even harder to reap the rewards later in life. I worked very hard to get to UCT, and now that I'm here, I'm working even harder to attain success in my degree," he said. "I don't take any opportunities for granted. I'm humbled that I've been chosen to represent the faculty and the university in Austria," he said.

As he prepares for his big trip, Malebana said he's looking forward to understanding the Austrian health system and gaining some valuable insight into how medical doctors practice medicine in that country and how it compares to South Africa.

A whole new world

The elective will consist of several rotations in different areas of internal medicine and Malebana will be based at a teaching hospital affiliated to Med Uni Graz. He said he is most excited about his oncology rotations after developing a keen interest in this area of medicine.

"I have always enjoyed studying and learning more about the management of different cancers. So, I really look forward to seeing how things are done in Austria. I know each day will be filled with something new to learn, whether it's in oncology or a different area of medicine. I'm eager to get going," he said.

But over and above the work, Malebana said he is thrilled to have the opportunity to travel outside of South Africa's borders for the first time, to experience diverse cultures and cuisines, gain insight into a new way of life, and build new, lasting friendships.

"It's going to be an adventure, that's for sure – one that I've already embraced with my arms wide open. I'm grateful that it has come my way," he said.

Story by Niémah Davids, UCT News

Ends

Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

Thami Nkwanyane

Media Liaison and Monitoring Officer

Communication and Marketing Department

University of Cape Town

Rondebosch

Tel: (021) 650 5672

Cell: 063 366 3993 / 072 563 9500

Email: thami.nkwanyane@uct.ac.za

Website: www.uct.ac.za