

(PRLEAP.COM) June 6, 2014 - Pretoria, South Africa – "This is probably the biggest concentration of IQ in Pretoria right now," Prof Zander Myburg smilingly said at the Annual Top Achievers Function for students of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences on 8 May 2014.

Prof Myburg, who holds the Chair in Forest Genomics and Biotechnology in the Forestry and Agricultural Institute, and is a professor in the Department of Genetics, was the guest speaker and shared some lessons and successes of his academic career. "You must have passion for what you do, and you must surround yourself with like-minded people – fellow students who share your passion and your vision, people who will grow with you and eventually become your academic family. It is also important to have a balanced life and make time for your loved ones and family."

Prof Myburg not only developed significant new capacity for forestry genomics and biotechnology in South Africa, but him and his team's article on the Eucalyptus genome was recently accepted for publication in the very prestigious journal Nature.

Brendon Thorpe scooped up the most awards at the event. He received the PPS Prize for the most promising Actuarial Science graduate, the Prudential Prize for the best student in Actuarial Mathematics, the Momentum Group Prize for the best student in Life Insurance, as well as the Discovery Holdings Prize for the best honours research project.

Lukas Radman de Soto received three prizes at the event: the Department of Physics Prize for the best first-year student in Physics, the Jan F Cilliers Book Prize for the best first-year student in Geology, as well as the Department of Chemistry Prize for the best first-year student in Chemistry.

Werner Pansegrouw not only received the Outsurance Prize for the most promising Actuarial and Financial Management graduate, but was also awarded the Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Medal for Excellent Undergraduate Academic Achievement as the best student in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences. Pansegrouw obtained his BSc degree in Actuarial and Financial Mathematics at the University of Pretoria in April, with a weighted average performance of 92% over his three years of study.

This year's Function for Outstanding Achievers was even more special than the previous occasions. The Dean's Merit List was announced (the list includes students with an average of

University of Pretoria Awards Outstanding Future Scientists

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more than 75%) and the Top 30 [undergraduate students](#) on this list (with averages of 85% and more) were also acknowledged at this event. The Dean also specially mentioned all the candidates who received their doctoral degrees during the recent autumn graduation ceremony and announced that they will also be included in the Dean's Merit List.

At this prestigious event, a total of 58 prizes and trophies were awarded to the top students in the Faculty. The Faculty is proud to have such outstanding academic achievers and is very grateful to all the sponsors of the prizes and trophies.

About University of Pretoria [The University of Pretoria came into existence in 1908](#) as the Pretoria branch of the Transvaal University College and become a recognised tertiary education provider in 1930. The campus has nine facilities of education and a business school.