

History will be made at this year's VUT spring graduation

By [Mike Khuboni](#), issued by [Vaal University of Technology](#)

14 Sep 2020

A 31-year-old baker will become the Vaal University of Technology's (VUT) first ever visually impaired graduate later this year.

Mr Thabo Lenyora of Ventersburg in the Free State will receive a National Diploma in Policing during the university's spring graduation ceremony.

Being visually impaired since a teenager has not disheartened or floored Lenyora - instead it has inspired the VUT student to keep his feet on the ground but to reach for the stars.

Lenyora has a burning ambition to study law next year and also concentrate on building up his bakery, which he runs in his hometown with his fiancée Anny Tsubella.

He was in grade 11 in 2006 when glaucoma – a disease which damages the optic nerve – robbed him of just about all his sight. “I have enough vision to walk around on my own but that's it – for the rest, including reading and writing, I need assistance,” said Lenyora.

It took him a little over three years to complete his Diploma in Policing through VUT's disabilities services unit established in 2016.

“I used a speech device called a non-visual desktop assistant, which communicates everything through speech. It was critical in helping me get through all the study and writing involved.”

Lenyora said there were some things the device was unable to read and convert such as PowerPoint presentations so those had to be scanned and edited separately. He received excellent assistance for that from personnel in the Social Justice Department at the university.

“VUT's disability unit was in its infancy when I began my studies in 2017. Progress has been made in providing facilities for disabled students at VUT and there is always good support from lecturers.

“Using a disability as an excuse for not doing well in your studies is wrong. A disability can make studying more challenging but disabled students can excel if they work hard and commit and discipline themselves,” he said.

He paid tribute to the two women in his life - his mom Mrs Susan Lenyora and his fiancée - for the fantastic support structure they provided for him.

Lenyora is currently building up his bakery business in Ventersburg but his sights are set on studying law next year.

“Within the next few years, I see myself playing a role in South Africa's criminal justice system where I will be able to use some of what I have learned in my studies.

“Our country is cursed with GBV (gender-based violence) and other domestic violence and I want to be part of processes,



such as rehabilitation, which improve the situation.

"I will not allow my disability to hold me back in that area," he added.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mike Khuboni is the Executive Director: Advancement at the Vaal University of Technology

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Vaal University of Technology

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