Mudzunga Thangavhuelelo-Lucas

Degree studied: MSc Sustainability and Environmental Studies

Year of graduation: 2012 (Awarded MSc with Merit)

Home Country: South Africa

What undergraduate degree did you have and where did you study for it?
I studied BSc in Biochemistry and Microbiology and honours in Microbiology at the University of Venda, South Africa.

Why did you choose to study at University of Strathclyde?
In 2010 I secured a sponsorship from the Africa-America Institute in Johannesburg and the International Ford Foundation in New York and then spent time researching the best Environmental programmes in the UK. The University of Strathclyde was the obvious top choice because of the wide variety of electives. Having been a pure Science student in the past years, I felt it was important to couple science with policy studies. The Masters course at Strathclyde met my expectations by combining Scientific, Engineering, Policy, Business and Social studies; this understanding is paramount to tackle global environment challenges.

Experience of Strathclyde & Glasgow:
My lecturers were the best you could ask for. They were always available for support and also responded to emails very promptly. Glasgow is a vibrant city, where people are so friendly and they made me feel as if I am part of them. There was never a day that I felt like an outsider.

What are you doing now?
I am working as an Energy Efficiency Project Manager at the National Business Initiative in South Africa. The NBI is a voluntary group of leading national and multi-national companies, working together towards sustainable growth and development through partnerships, practical programs and policy engagement. The NBI is the first company to introduce the UK Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) in Africa and it works closely with the Carbon Trust. Having worked on Carbon Trust project while at Strathclyde, this makes my job easy to understand and I am grateful of the opportunities that were at my dispose while studying at Strathclyde. The purpose of my job is to improve the landscape of energy efficiency in South Africa. We engage Government and stakeholders to improve their strategies in as much as Energy efficiency is concerned. I also do appraisals of energy studies; this is one of the skills I learnt from the Environmental Impact Assessment module. Many of the concepts from modules learned at Strathclyde are ones that I deal with in my day-to-day role, and the knowledge helped me to acquire my current job.

Did you participate in any other programmes or activities whilst at University that you think have helped you in your career?
My epic moment in the course was participating in the Carbon Audit project which was a partnership between Strathclyde University, Carbon Trust, the Princes Mayday and Scottish Businesses in the community. The audit emphasized the importance of climate change mitigation, energy and resource efficiency and provided me with the skills to conduct energy audits, develop energy management plans and to identify areas to improve energy efficiency; the skills I gained enabled me to get the job I am currently doing. Strathclyde gave me a level of intellect in the sense that I can debate on both national and global issues freely because I had the opportunity to study with students from different countries across the globe.

Where will Strathclyde Civil & Environmental Engineering take you?