

First Industrial Psychology Professor at UNAM

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The road to success is always under construction...

“If your dreams don’t scare you, they aren’t big enough,” said the famous Muhammad Ali once upon a time. Associate Professor Wesley Pieters, who started working at UNAM as a student assistant in 2007, was promoted to Associate Professor in Industrial Psychology, this year. Prof Pieters is a proud UNAM graduate, with an Honours Degree in Industrial Psychology, a Master’s degree in Industrial Psychology and a Diploma in Labour and employment studies (2004-2014). After completion of his Master’s degree in 2011, Prof Pieters worked as an examinations officer in the then Faculty of Law, while pursuing part-time lecturing in psychology. While working at the Faculty of Law, he pursued his PhD in Industrial Psychology through the University of the Free State (2016-2018). Prof Pieters applied a few times for psychology positions at the psychology department but was not successful. Here he showed his resilience and continued to apply, and eventually managed to join the department in 2015. He carefully identified the main criteria for promotion and worked his way through the academic ranks.



Enquiring about his swift progression, Prof Pieters attributed his success to “being intentional, mindful of the main objectives as an academic and consistently working towards these goals”. In academia the key pillars include teaching, community

engagement and research, however, each of these work roles contribute differently to your performance management and career progression.

Prof Pieters added that planning for the next year, starts already in the current year, working with a strategy referred to as “managing by objectives”. “Discipline and collaborations with colleagues allowed me to publish effortlessly,” said Prof Pieters with tangible excitement. “I value development of self, students and others. I try to share my knowledge and opportunities with colleagues that are eager to learn and willing to put in the effort. While we continue to pursue career and life goals, we need to take care of our well-being and continue adding value to these various roles.”

When asked about his future goals as the first Industrial/Organisational Psychology Associate Professor promoted at UNAM, Prof Pieters indicated that he wishes to contribute to leadership within academia. He also hopes to continue expanding on the theory and application of other sub-fields in Industrial Psychology, and work towards the recognition and registration of Industrial/Organisational Psychology in Namibia.

In his final remarks, Prof Pieters encouraged colleagues to identify where they would like to go and understand what they need to focus on. Work closely with colleagues that can guide and challenge you to get to your end goals. “It will still be required from you to put in the hard yards, but with the right kind of support, you’ll see it is possible”.