

The Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (SAIMM) acknowledges the need to focus on our youth in South Africa. SAIMM's subcommittee on Career Guidance and Education, arranged a student career development day at the Sci-Bono Centre in Newtown, Johannesburg. The event, which took place on 13 August 2013, was sponsored by the SAIMM, Sound Mining and the University of Johannesburg.

The purpose of the event was to engage with university students, currently studying mining or metallurgy, about their aspirations and career path expectations in the context of our changing mining environment. It was indeed pleasing to see the number and calibre of the students that attended, and a particularly strong student representation from both the University of Johannesburg and UNISA was well noted.

While it is hoped that the students left with a better understanding of what to expect and what they need to do during their first five years of employment, it was clear from their questions that there is a lot of uncertainty regarding their future careers in the South African mining industry.

Students are concerned about the limited number of opportunities available to graduates entering the mining industry, and about how they would receive the training necessary for eventual recognition as competent engineers in the workplace.

To build on the success of this event, SAIMM is now seeking to look into the needs of new graduates, to revisit the effectiveness of the SAIMM's mentoring scheme, and to consider solutions to ensure that on-mine experiential training is available. This may involve working with mining companies, the universities, and with government to make sure each and every student gets the opportunity to join a graduate development programme. It is also essential that graduates have the opportunity to interact with mentors.

The following people are acknowledged for giving up of their time to contribute to the success of the day: Selo Ndlovu, Theunis Otto, Roger Dixon, Marek Dworzanowski, Dirk J. van Niekerk, Vaughn Duke, Dave Poultney, Kea Shumba, Andre Dougall, Peter Knottenbelt, Zanele Sibisi, Gorden Smith, Jim Porter, Nelson Ndlala, Chris Setuke, Sam Moolla, Ivan Wermuth, and all others who attended.

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