

# The Growthpoint Greenovate awards programme

Growthpoint Properties, in collaboration with the Green Building Council of South Africa, has started a project to explore ideas for the development and establishment of a student awards programme

By Stanley Karombo



Dion Chang, Keynote speaker at the 2016 Greenovate gala dinner, held at the Radisson Blu Hotel

The programme, dubbed “the Greenovate awards”, is envisaged to introduce university students to green-building thinking, and recognises excellence in application. The Greenovate Awards programme is expected to provide opportunities for students who are finishing their degrees in property studies, construction studies and quantity surveying, to connect and interface with industry experts in sustainability.

“These students are tomorrow’s leaders, who will take the green building movement forward and ensure it continues to innovate and inspire,” says Remy Kloos, Growthpoint Properties’ Sustainability Manager. “We want them to enter the market as advocates for green building, with a passion to create better and more sustainable cities, towns and neighbourhoods.”

After being embraced by universities, the programme is poised to grow in leaps and bounds. The Greenovate awards competition

will “target students in their honours year in the property, construction and quantity surveying departments,” says Kloos.

The Growthpoint Greenovate Awards was piloted at the University of Cape Town, Wits and the University of Pretoria in 2015. Students were challenged to come up with ideas that would result in a research project to promote a more sustainable built environment. Their projects could be applied to any aspect of a building, including design, development, planning, construction and materials – anything that makes the way we live greener, and our environmental footprint lighter. The top two performers from each institution competed against one another for a grand prize of R30 000.

The 2016 grand prize included a R30 000 cash prize and the opportunity to present at the annual GBCSA convention (tickets, flights and accommodation included). The second and third prizes included a R15 000

and R10 000 cash prize respectively, along with GBCSA convention tickets.

The intention behind this programme is to expose the students to key focus areas concerning sustainability within the industry, and to introduce industry leaders to the talent available to them. It also acts as a platform for Growthpoint to recruit students for graduate programmes and internships, culminating in potential job opportunities. Everyone wins when innovation for a greener, healthier, more sustainable environment is nurtured. The students’ smart and inspiring thinking shows how we can drive green-building thinking forward to ensure a better, greener future.

Growthpoint sees the programme becoming much bigger than it is now. After the pilot in 2015, the University of the Free State and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University were added in 2016. “Growthpoint is excited at the potential of this programme,” says Kloos.

The benefits of participation go beyond winning the first prize. The programme also provides students with an opportunity to work with leading industry thinkers and potentially exposes them to exciting employment opportunities. It gives leading companies direct access to real talent. The feedback from the students involved in the pilot programme and the 2016 programme was very positive – they thanked Growthpoint and the GBCSA for setting up the initiative. Students are also exposed to the Green Star SA Accredited Professional programme (GSSA AP), which is made available to entrants at a discounted student rate.

The aim of the latter is also to educate honours-level students as well as possible in green building principles. This includes awareness of South Africa’s own Green Star SA rating system, and involves a supported online course as well as a face-to-face workshop. On completion of the GSSA AP programme, students will have the option of completing the online exam and becoming a GSSA AP. The awards programme encourages students to learn about green building and sustainability early in their career, so that the next generation of property professionals can have many positive impacts on our urban environment, which will benefit all South Africans hugely. Investing in the youth is investing in our future.

The built environment has a major impact on the environment and sustainability. With the Greenovate Awards, we want to recognise excellence and innovation in students’ own understanding of green principles for the built environment, across all aspects and disciplines. The aspiring young professionals have the potential to transform the way we live, with gentler impacts on the world around us. The Greenovate awards will link environmental challenges to innovative thinking through a programme that was designed to inspire and encourage students of the built environment.

To date, the Greenovate programme has enlisted the expertise of the following industry experts to sit on the judges’ panel: GBCSA Chief Executive Officer Brian Wilkinson; SAPOA Chief Executive Officer Neil Gopal; SAPVIA Chief Executive Officer Moeketsi Thobela; Thulani Kuzwayo, Managing Executive: Public Sector at the GBCSA; Tesla Business Development Manager Evan Rice; Martin Smith, Technical Director: Buildings at Aurecon; Mike Aldous, an associate at Green Building & Sustainability Services/BIM Champion of Mott MacDonald; and Werner van Antwerpen, Head of Sustainability and Utilities at Growthpoint Properties.



First prize recipients Cédric Fournier and Priscilla Nthai of UCT, with supervisors Saul Nurick and Abby Street



Second prize recipients Nthabiseng Makgabo and Bongwiwe Dlamini of Wits, with supervisor Samuel Azasu



Third place recipient Lungelo Gcwabaza of NMMU, with Growthpoint's Sustainability Manager Remy Kloos