

UCT students named winners of Greenovate Awards

Students from the University of Cape Town scooped both first and second prizes in the inaugural Growthpoint Greenovate Awards.



Greenovate Award winners (L-R) UCT team of Dion Ross, Mekie van der Merwe and Rowan McKenzie

The awards programme is an initiative launched by Growthpoint Properties in association with the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA) earlier this year. It is designed to inspire and encourage students of the built environment to discover, explore and invent ways to live more sustainably.

The Growthpoint Greenovate Awards was piloted at the University of Cape Town, University of the Witwatersrand and University of Pretoria in 2015. For its premier programme, students were challenged to come up with ideas that would result in a research project that promotes a more sustainable built environment. Their projects could be applied to any aspect of a building - design, development, planning, construction, materials - anything that makes the way we live greener and our environmental footprint lighter.

Pioneering projects

"Everyone is a winner when innovation for a greener, healthier, more sustainable environment is nurtured. The university students taking part in the Greenovate Awards, and the winners in particular, presented pioneering projects. Their smart and inspiring thinking shows how we can drive green building thinking forward, to ensure a better, greener future," Werner van Antwerpen, head of sustainability at Growthpoint Properties, explains.

The winners of the Greenovate Awards are the UCT team of Rowan McKenzie, Dijon Ross and Mieke van der Merwe, with supervisor Saul Nurick. They focused on the role of the IPD Green Property Indicator in the South African property market.

This team took home R30,000 in prize money. They will also be fully sponsored to attend the GBCSA's Green Building Convention in 2016. Here they will present their research project to property professionals and green leaders from around the country and across the continent. They will also be treated to green building tours to get an insider's perspective on some of South Africa's most innovative green buildings.

The UCT team taking second place, supervised by Dr Kathy Michell, comprised Alex Demetrious, Daniel Searle and Ken Toplis. They examined urban facilities management and the development of a sustainability rating tool for urban precincts. These students used the Central City Improvement District (CCID) of Cape Town as their case study. The team earned a prize of R8,000 for their insightful project, as well as tickets to the Green Building Convention in 2016.

ECI framework

The third placed group came from University of the Witwatersrand. The team included Amy McGregor, Thabo Mthuthu and Wardah Peters, and was supervised by Dr Dave Root. This group researched an early contractor involvement (ECI) framework to improve sustainability and green building practice in the construction industry. They won R2,000 and tickets to the Green Building Convention 2016.

"The award entries were all of an outstanding calibre. They show an exciting new wave of green thinking. Equally inspiring is the exposure that the many property, construction and quantity surveying third year and honours level students are getting to green building principles as a result the Growthpoint Greenovate Awards Programme. By learning about green building and sustainability early in their careers, the positive impacts this next generation of property professionals will have on our urban environment will benefit all South Africans hugely," Brian Wilkinson, CEO of the GBCSA, says.

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