

Newsflash!

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SMU Sport Officer Scoops Administrator of the Year Award

SMU Sports Officer, Ms Busisiwe Sijora scooped the Administrator of the Year award during the Gauteng Women in Sport Awards 2024, held in Kyalami, Midrand, on Saturday, 2 March 2024. The award is bestowed on individuals who have significantly advanced opportunities for women in sports, demonstrated excellence in their administrative roles, fostered inclusivity, contributed to capacity building, engaged in self-development and promoted excellence in sports management.

Being a finalist amongst esteemed sports administrators in the province was a testament to the calibre of competition and the rigorous standards set by the award criteria. Winning this award undoubtedly opens doors for Busisiwe to further her career, providing opportunities to engage in more significant initiatives, expand networks and to inspire others in the field of sports administration. "Winning the Administrator of the Year award was an unexpected honour amidst fierce competition. It reaffirmed the significance of persistent dedication and unwavering commitment to sports administration. This recognition not only validates the demanding work invested but also serves as a motivation to continue pushing boundaries and making impactful contributions to the sports community," said Busisiwe.

As an administrator, her approach to performing duties diligently is founded on two key principles, namely, effective planning, and continuous personal development. "Firstly, I precisely organise tasks through a detailed to-do list, breaking them down into manageable segments on a monthly, weekly, and



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daily basis. This structured approach ensures that I stay on track and effectively manage my workload. Secondly, I prioritise communication with student-athletes, actively engaging with them to understand their challenges, aspirations, and feedback. By listening attentively, I can tailor administrative approaches to better meet their needs and foster a supportive environment,” shares Busisiwe.

Ms. Sijora recognises the importance of personal development in staying abreast of industry trends and best practices. To this end, she regularly participates in short courses and seeks opportunities to network with senior administrators. Additionally, she draws insights from Europe-based content on sports management, recognising that she can learn valuable lessons from institutions that are ahead of us in this field. “Furthermore, I actively seek guidance from mentors and engage with other professionals in senior sports positions at different spaces in the sports industry. This allows me to gain valuable insights into effective administrative practices and refine my approach accordingly. By continuously learning and adapting, I ensure that I am equipped to effectively meet the demands of sports administration and contribute positively to the field,” she said.

Her plans for the Sports Officer portfolio at the SMU Sports and Recreation Department involve implementing initiatives to enhance inclusivity and diversity within sports programmes, ensuring equitable opportunities for all; strengthening partnerships with external organisations to provide additional resources and opportunities for sports development; to enhance administrative efficiency through the implementation of innovative technologies and streamlined processes; continuously advocate for the advancement of women in sports through targeted initiatives and awareness campaigns; Foster a culture of excellence and sportsmanship within the university's community through various engagement activities and events; Putting SMU Sport and Recreation out there in terms of sharing our stories.

“Additionally, I feel there is a strong need to develop and expand mentorship programmes to nurture leadership skills and personal development among student-athletes. These kinds of programmes would aim to provide guidance, support, and opportunities for growth, empowering students to reach their full potential both on and off the field.”

In addition to her role as a Sports Officer at the SMU Sports and Recreation Department, she is actively engaged in the following leadership positions within the sports community: Vice Chairperson – USSA Football, Secretary – USSA Handball, and EXCO Member – South African Handball Federation. “Two years ago, I started an initiative to support sports graduates by creating a WhatsApp group dedicated to sharing sports-related job opportunities every week. This platform has served as a valuable resource for aspiring professionals, providing them with access to career opportunities and networking connections within the sports industry. I am proud to say that this initiative has not only opened doors for numerous sports graduates but has also brought hope and encouragement to many individuals pursuing their passion in sports administration and management,” she recalls.

Busisiwe is a multi-award-winning administrator, boosting an award-laden cabinet that encompasses a ten-year awards haul:

- 2024 Administrator of the Year – Gauteng Women in Sports Awards - Provincial
- 2023 Champion of Service – SMU Student Affairs Excellence Awards
- 2023 Full Colours – SMU Student Affairs Excellence Awards
- 2023 Administrator of the Year – Gauteng Women in Sports Awards – Tshwane
- 2022 Administrator of the Year – Gauteng Women in Sports Awards – Tshwane
- 2017 Administrator of the Year – TUT Sports Awards
- 2017 International Participation – TUT Sports Awards
- 2014 Best Student Administrator of the Year – TUT Sports Awards

Through her multifaceted involvement in sports leadership roles and initiatives, she is deeply committed to driving positive change and fostering growth within the sports community. She believes that collaboration, innovation, and mentorship are essential components for advancing the field of sports administration and creating impactful opportunities for all individuals involved.

