

GIBS faculty recognised for teaching business practices that help corporations confront society's 'grand challenges'

Issued by [Gordon Institute of Business Science](#)

16 Sep 2016

Faculty members who lecture on a core module of the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) PGDip (Postgraduate Diploma in General Management) programme entitled Human Behaviour and Performance have recently been awarded the prestigious Aspen Institute Business and Society 2016 Faculty Pioneer Award.

Dubbed “the Oscars of the business school world” these awards celebrate educators who demonstrate leadership and risk-taking and focus on a curriculum that helps contribute to resolving on the world’s ‘grand challenges’.

The GIBS Human Behaviour and Performance module, taught by Professor Margie Sutherland, Dr Ngao Motsei, Morris Mthombeni, Jonathan Cook and Anthony Wilson-Prangley, aims to expand delegates’ knowledge on bringing different people together to drive performance. This framework helps leaders to refine the crucial management goals of performance and inclusion. The faculty members on this programme were recognised for developing coursework that helps students understand and respond to the human complexity of the world around them. The module combines theory from sociology, social-psychology and organisational behaviour and includes a practical element involving visits to places of symbolic importance as well as learning through dialogue, theatre and story sharing.

“The Human Behaviour and Performance course is integral to our philosophy at GIBS – business cannot thrive unless it is deeply connected to society. Although the course is South African in orientation, the issues it embraces are global and key to shaping the kind of business leaders the world needs today,” says Professor Nicola Kleyn, dean at GIBS.

For over a decade, the Aspen Institute Faculty Pioneer Awards have recognised faculty who are at the frontline of teaching the complexities of the business and society interface. The focus of this year’s award centred on business school faculty who incorporate inter-disciplinary approaches in their teaching.

“As members of the GIBS faculty we teach many theories from across the world, while also ensuring that we profile local experience and what the rest of the world can learn from us. This has been a hugely collaborative effort over many years and the course is always evolving as we learn more about how we can bring people together to achieve results,” says Anthony Wilson-Prangley, GIBS faculty.

Jonathan Cook, GIBS faculty adds “This course grew out of our determination to generate the kind of tough, honest but respectful conversations South African business leaders needed to have with each other about race, gender, discrimination and opportunity. We look at the psychological and social origins of prejudice, but above all we draw on the stories of the members in the class to help them learn to listen to fellow students, however different, with insight and appreciation. While the course focuses on the particular circumstances of South Africa, it provides the experiential insight any person would need to manage effectively in any diverse society - which is anywhere business is conducted in the world.”

“I salute the faculty who have developed and honed this course and the students whose outlooks have broadened and shifted as a consequence of engaging deeply with each other on the divides that prevent us from growing inclusively,” concludes Professor Kleyn.

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