

Being visually impaired does not hold this NWU alumnus and PhD graduate back

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Disability is not inability. Advocate Jan Tladi confirmed this statement when he defied the odds and became the first completely blind student to graduate with a PhD from the North-West University's (NWU's) Mahikeng Campus. Jan enrolled at the NWU Business School in Mahikeng in 2017, and successfully completed his degree in 2020.

The title of his PhD thesis is "Corporate governance within South African regulatory agencies: towards an implementation framework".

He is currently a legal advisor in the office of the Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation.

Asked about his experiences of taking on the huge challenge of studying for his PhD, Jan says: "Being visually impaired, I knew I had to overcome greater challenges than my peers.

"Among others, these included doubling up effort and time to be on par with my fellow students. My extensive research involved gathering large amounts of data – often in inaccessible formats – and transcribing it into an accessible format, which was time consuming."

He says the NWU Disability Unit played a major supporting role while he was studying.

"To say the least, the technical and specialised support I received from the NWU Disability Unit in Mahikeng was awesome and impressive. They made me feel at home and accepted as a visually impaired student."

He has high praise for the unit's Vida Mutlaneng, whose support contributed greatly towards his academic success, and grateful for Ronnie Tshazibana's assistance.

"Ronnie often went out of his way to ensure that I received the support I needed throughout my PhD journey. This involved having to work on weekends and accompanying me when I attended colloquiums and workshops," explains Jan.

He says the NWU Disability Unit staff members are invaluable, and their humanity and compassion are well suited to supporting students with disabilities.

Jan also holds a BJuris and LLB degree from the University of Limpopo, an LLM from the University of Pretoria, and a diploma in management development from the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Listen to a sound clip of Jan <http://www.nwu.ac.za/sites/www.nwu.ac.za/files/files/i-news/uploads/2021/Jan-Tladi-voicenote.mp3>, talking about his journey.



Jan Tladi is the first completely blind person to graduate with a PhD from the NWU's Mahikeng Campus.

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