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The Southern African Association for Energy Efficiency (SAEE)

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## **Bursaries to students with energy efficiency vision for SA**

*JOHANNESBURG, 16 NOVEMBER 2011:* Brian Saunders and Sheree Anne Marinus, two 2<sup>nd</sup> year Bachelor of Architecture students at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), were announced as two of the three deserving recipients of bursaries from the Southern African Association for Energy Efficiency (SAEE), a chapter of the US-based Association of Energy Engineers (AEE). Merishka Singh, also in her 2<sup>nd</sup> year of study toward a Degree in Town and Regional Planning with the Durban University of Technology (DUT), is the third recipient.

All three candidates delivered excellent academic results in their first year of study which demonstrates good work ethic, dedication and determination. The SAEE bursary committee is overwhelmed by the enthusiasm shown toward the energy efficiency cause by these youngsters. The three awardees have been earmarked as persons with great vision for the future of South Africa.

Brian was an obvious choice as a bursary recipient. He achieved an outstanding academic result of 11 distinctions which afforded him 'The 2010 Student with the Best Overall Performance in the First Year of Study in Bachelor of Architectural Studies' Award at NMMU.

"When we consider the vast amount of renewable energy resources available in South Africa, it is hard to understand that our country's energy sector continues to rely almost completely on our coal reserves as a means of producing electricity," said Brian. He quite rightly ascribes the reasons for this to be the global skills shortage in the renewable energy field as well as the high cost of harnessing renewable resources.

"With his positive attitude towards challenges and creative problem-solving work ethic, we feel confident that Brian will make a contribution to reducing the load placed on energy resources through his Architectural field of study, especially since the building sector is one of the highest users of energy across the world," commented Prof LJ Grobler, President of the SAEE, at the official hand-over of the bursaries yesterday which formed part of the SAEE's Annual Banquet and Awards ceremony, the official opening ceremony of the 6<sup>th</sup> Southern African Energy Efficiency Convention (SAEEC2011) and Exhibition.

A touching motivation from Sheree Anne Marinus grabbed the attention of the SAEE bursary committee. Her biggest dream is to make a difference to township living by contributing towards affordable, durable family homes through Architectural innovation. Homes that are sustainably built to last for a long time without requiring unnecessary resources to make it optimally habitable is her vision. "Homes without leaks, without too much solar radiation penetrating through them, homes that these families can live comfortably in for a long time without using scarce resources to sustain it", says Sheree. With an excellent academic average and 3 distinctions behind her name for 2010, her contagious optimism, and an enthusiastic approach to her tasks at hand, the SAEE believes Sheree has what it takes to make a difference by combining energy efficiency with a humanitarian approach. Prof Grobler commented that Sheree has the right idea when she notes in her bursary

application, “We should go back to basics and think creatively how we can make South Africa an energy efficient country.”

With a thorough understanding of the challenges South Africa faces with regard to sustainable energy production, it is no wonder that Merishka from DUT has bagged no less than 7 distinctions and is aiming for the highest possible qualification she could achieve in the field of Town and Regional Planning. Merishka passionately comments on her field of study, “I love the course I am studying and cannot see myself following any other career path.” Prof Grobler says, “Merishka is very perceptive in her views and shows potential as someone who can really see the bigger picture in the energy industry, not just by remedying the current problems, but by looking at ways in which tools, methods and controls should be implemented to ensure the development of the South African economy.”

The SAEE annually awards three bursaries to deserving students in the built environment, environmental and engineering fields of studies to encourage them to continue making contributions to an energy efficient economy for the country. This year a staggering 51 applications were received from educational institutions across the country. Students may also apply to become members of the SAEE at no charge.

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PICTURE CAPTIONS:

Marishka Singh from DUT receives her SAEE Bursary from Edith Kikonyogo, Board Member of the SAEE.

Brian Saunders from NMMU.

Sheree Ann Marinus from NMMU.

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