



**Mangosuthu  
University of Technology**

## **MINUTES**

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Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Convocation held on Saturday, 17 November 2018 at 09h00 in the Old Lecture Theatre, MUT Main Campus.

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## **SECTION A: ADMINISTRATIVE**

### **1. CONSTITUTION OF THE MEETING**

#### **1.1. Present**

As per the attached attendance register.

#### **1.2. Apologies**

Mr S Gumede

Treasurer

Prof M Ramogale

DVC: Teaching and Learning

Dr J Van Koller

DVC: Resource and Planning (Acting)

#### **1.3. In attendance**

Mr PP Masala

Deputy Registrar: Policy and Secretariat

The Secretary of Convocation confirmed the quorum in accordance with the MUT Statute at 10h05.

### **2. Opening and Welcome**

The Deputy President (Mr Mafa), in the chair, opened the meeting and welcomed all members present. The Secretary of Council then requested that a moment of silence be observed on the passing away of the former President of Convocation, Mr Henry Mabaso. Furthermore, the chairperson appreciated the presence of the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Malaza. In his opening remarks, the Chair noted the following:

- (i) That only one academic staff had attended the AGM even though all members of academic staff were members of Convocation.
- (ii) None of the Deputy Vice-Chancellors were present.
- (iii) Convocation had an interest in the affairs of the university since the graduates carried the university certificate. The reputation of the university has an impact on the value of the certificate hence convocation had to do all in its powers to preserve it.

### **3. Confirmation of the Agenda**

The agenda was confirmed as received.

### **4. Declaration of Possible Conflict of Interest**

There was no conflict of interest declared on items on the agenda.

## **SECTION B: ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

### **1. Minutes of the reconvened Annual General Meeting of Convocation held on 10 December 2016**

#### **1.1. Adoption of minutes of reconvened Annual General Meeting of Convocation held on 10 December 2016**

Minutes were proposed for adoption by Mr Mbono and seconded by Mr Khumalo.

#### **1.2. Matters arising from minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting**

There were no matters arising.

### **2. Reports Presented**

#### **2.1. State of the University Report- Dr ED Malaza – Vice-Chancellor & Principal**

The Vice-Chancellor presented a state of the university report. He reported on the following:

- (i) The university would be celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019.
- (ii) There were several accomplishments in 2018. These were:
  - (a) Two staff members in the Faculty of Management Sciences had obtained the PhD qualification;
  - (b) A staff member in the Biomedical Sciences Department won the best poster presentation in the International Translational and Regenerative Medicine Conference” held in Rome, Italy on 25-27 April 2018;

- (iii) The University Council had in 2017 requested the Minister to appoint an independent assessor to enable it to fully understand the role the Council had played in the governance and management difficulties experienced by the University.
- (iv) The Independent Assessors, Dr Barney Pityana and Ms Judith Favish, had completed their work and their report reached the University on 30 October 2018. This report would be gazetted very shortly.
- (v) In 2018 the full-time headcount enrolment was about 12 000 and largely undergraduate. Student diversity continued to be limited and almost 100% African and largely from the most underprivileged schools and dependent on funding through the National Student Financial Aid System.
- (vi) The university was planning for a full-time enrolment of 13 000 the following year, and it was anticipated that by 2025 it would have increased only by 5%.
- (vii) On the academic side, there was ongoing reform of the curriculum with a major focus on phasing out the Bachelor of Technology qualification, consolidating the diploma offering and introducing the post graduate advanced diploma as a qualification to prepare students for postgraduate study.
- (viii) There had been a spike in student suicide due to stress. The University had put in place various academic support arrangements for students as well as early warning systems for monitoring the academic performance of students.
- (ix) In the provision of physical facilities to meet the growing numbers and expanding functions, the university had been handicapped in completing most projects funded by the infrastructure and efficiency grant of the Department of Higher Education and Training.
- (x) Management had held a meeting with the landlords of all the external residences and the protection services in order to enforce the terms and provisions of the lease agreements and agree on immediate security improvements.
- (xi) The Office of the Vice Chancellor had acquired the capacity to lead a focused partnership and stakeholder engagement agenda aimed at enhancing the reputation of the university and mobilising resources to support the mission of the University.

(xii)The platform for a broader local engagement had been laid through a meeting on 12 October 2018 with a delegation from eThekweni municipality led by the City Manager, Mr Siphon Nzuza, that explored areas of collaboration between the city and the University, on one hand, and the development of a strong partnership for research collaboration between the City and the four regional universities.

(xiii)As part of developing the Strategic Plan for 2020-2025, Council approved a Strategy Framework at a workshop held on 19 September 2018. The Strategy Statement commits the University to revitalised academic value chain for the 4th Industrial Revolution.

(xiv)A strong Alumni Association was important in the current context in widening and sustaining the impact of the University upon society; in supporting it in its programme of continuing education and in helping it maintain its independence in a critical but free society.

(xv)In conclusion, the Vice-Chancellor thanked the alumni for their support and the contribution they were continuing to make to the University.

At the end of the report, an opportunity was given for a Question-and-Answer session.

## **2.2. Report of the Executive Committee – Mr EK Madlala – President**

The President of Convocation presented a report of the Executive Committee of Convocation. Before he could present his report, the President gave an opportunity to all who were present to introduce themselves. He explained that such a process would give convocants an opportunity to know one another and to network after the meeting. After the introductions, he reported on the following:

- (i) The Convocation leadership was still intact as elected in November 2015 at Bozzoli Hall.
- (ii) The instability in the Alumni Relations Office was worrisome. There was hope that with the recruitment process that was underway, the position would ultimately be filled.

- (iii) The CONVEXCO had countless meetings, some of which were amongst elected office bearers only and some with ex officio members.
- (iv) Unemployment in general remained on a high currently and was at around 27.5%.
- (v) Amongst the 6.21 Million unemployed S.A citizens, there were MUT graduates. These are students with whom convocants had shared a lecture room and as an Institution these were people MUT had moulded and released in the hope that with the qualifications given to them, they would be able to secure employment and better their lives and those of their families.
- (vi) Whilst the rate of unemployed graduates was low in comparison to the general rate of unemployment, there was another portion of the unemployed named the “discouraged work seekers” which is a disgruntled faction that had even ceased to seek employment. Arguably, the number of unemployed graduates had a significant impact on this group. With each community observing graduates struggling to secure employment, it was not difficult to believe that this had a direct correlation with the disgruntlement of uneducated unemployed job seekers.
- (vii) Universities of Technology by inventions were structured to specialize in Engineering, Technology, Applied Science and sometimes Natural Sciences. MUT was strategically placed to meet the challenges presented by new technologies and thus position itself as an institution of choice.
- (viii) Beyond intensified research initiatives to keep up with technology and re-structuring courses for alignment to the 4th Industrial Revolution, MUT must look into incorporating its Alumni in Technological Industries to further recent advancements.
- (ix) The call for Land expropriation had to be seen as an opportunity for MUT and its graduates. MUT’s Natural Sciences Faculty had made progressive steps in tapping into the Agricultural sphere. Public-Private Partnership MoUs should be sought through the Department of Agriculture to place MUT at the centre of a program to educate small

farmers and also equip them for the development and sustainability of both subsistence and commercial farming.

- (x) The challenges graduates across the country were facing emanated largely from the colonisation of Education. The curriculum and structure of the current education system was a perpetually incomplete image which promises a better future (limited to employment) upon graduation.
- (xi) It was important that the Institution re-looked at the structure of the courses it was offering, using Institutional Autonomy and Academic freedom as interim means. It was slightly comforting to learn that the Institution was in the process of introducing Entrepreneurial Skills subjects across all courses. However much more needed to be done. It must not be business as usual.
- (xii) The Convocation of MUT had become a force to be reckoned with within the Institution. This came as a result of the deployment the Executive of Convocation had made to the University Council and as well as the extent to which such deployment had been central in the transformation of Council and bringing about stability in MUT.
- (xiii) The following was the breakdown of representation of Convocation on Institutional structures:-
  - 1. President of Convocation: K Madlala:
    - Member of Council;
    - Chairperson of the Human Resources Committee of Council;
    - Member of the Executive Committee of Council (EXCO); and
    - Deputy Chairperson of the Institutional Forum.
  - 2. Deputy President: A Mafa:
    - Member of Council;
    - Member of the Audit and Risk committee; and
    - Member of the Planning and Resources Committee.
- (xiv) The following programs of Convocation were put forward:
  - 1. Convocation Graduate placement program**
    - 1.1.** Linked to graduate unemployment is the issue of lack of experience required for entrance positions into the industry. CONVEXCO

welcomed and heavily supported the notion of scrapping of experience for entry level positions.

- 1.2. In bridging the experience gap, the CONVEXCO was seeking for the adoption of an MUT graduate placement program. Through this program, graduates would be placed across various spheres related to their qualifications and paid a stipend by the MUT Convocation. This program would be structured to be impactful to a graduate for the entire duration of the placement. Mentorship and close monitoring of workplace adaptability, functionality and success would be guided through a series of quarterly sessions with the placed graduates as well feedback sessions with the companies where they would be placed.

## **2. Donate a R100 campaign**

The success of the program would heavily rely on donation from convocation members. With 1 000 graduates consistently donating R100 a month towards the program, Convocation would have sufficient funds to place approximately 30 unemployed graduates in various companies for a period of 12 months at a stipend of about R3 000 monthly. The CONVEXCO had tasked the President of Convocation with a responsibility of meeting with the CEOs of various companies to sell this concept.

## **3. Restructuring Alumni Chapters**

A few Alumni Chapters had been launched through the Marketing Department. In the current form, Alumni Chapters were structured around demographic locations. It was the view of CONVEXCO that whilst Chapters might be productive, more sense could be realised through further adding a profession to the grouping. One of the biggest challenges in mobilising Alumni was the question of individual benefit. Consolidating chapters around a profession would provide a wide range of individual benefits to MUT graduates. In their own professional space, they would be able to share trends and best practices. It would provide personal growth and workplace significance.

#### **4. Alumni Business Forum and Business Consortium**

The MUT CONVEXCO had received and supported a proposal for the establishment of the Alumni Business Forum, a business chapter of the Alumni. It was important that the Institution nurtured its own timber into the business arena. This would open more avenues for graduate development and employment with direct positive implication to the Institution's donor income stream. Beyond the existence of the proposed forum, CONVEXCO was making a proposal that the AGM mandates the CONVEXCO with facilitating the opening of a Business consortium. The consortium would become a joint venture of various companies which would be tasked with amongst other things, a mandate to ensure the development of small businesses of MUT.

Once the concept had been approved, the forum would need to have leadership which would look into the establishment of the consortium. The consortium would have to have a board for accountability and proper administration purposes.

- (xv) Funding remained a challenge in the execution of the programs of Convocation. As a means to alleviate this challenge, members of Convocation were encouraged to invest the little they could towards strengthening the structure to become an effective tool for the benefit of both the graduates and the institution.

At the end of the report, an opportunity was given for a Question-and-Answer session.

#### **Resolution:**

- i. The AGM adopted the report of the President of Convocation.
- ii. Mr Mbili moved for adoption and Mr Dlamini seconded.

**Action: President - Convocation**

**SECTION C: DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND CLOSURE**

- 1. Next Meeting: 16 November 2019.
- 2. There being no further items to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 11h50.

**APPROVED**

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....

**Chairperson**

