

# SPIRIT

JANUARY – MARCH 2020 – ISSUE NO. 1



shape and own the future



# HOW TO APPLY TO MUT

All first year applications to study at MUT are submitted through the Central Applications Office (CAO). This is a simplified way of applying for more than one programme, using one application form, and paying a single application fee. Apply online at [www.cao.ac.za](http://www.cao.ac.za) or by downloading an application form.

## CHECKING THE PROGRESS OF YOUR APPLICATION

You can track the progress of your application by going to [www.cao.ac.za](http://www.cao.ac.za) and entering your CAO number, sending an email to [enqgeneralcao@cao.ac.za](mailto:enqgeneralcao@cao.ac.za) or call 031 268 4444.

## CLOSING DATES FOR APPLICATIONS

Faculty of Engineering	30 Sept
1st semester	31 May
Faculty of Natural Sciences	30 Sept
Faculty of Management Sciences	30 Sept

*Applications submitted after 30 September accumulate a late application fee determined by the CAO.*

## APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

For South African applicants

- Grade 11 final results, grade 12 June exam results, National Senior Certificate or Statement of Results
- Identity document
- Students transferring from other universities should submit an academic record and a certificate of good conduct

Non-South African applicants

- Valid passport
- Valid proof of medical insurance cover
- Police clearance certificate
- SGCE, GCE, GCSE, IGCSE or Cambridge School Certificate

## MINIMUM ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

- National Senior Certificate with a diploma pass or N3 with 50% pass in Mathematics and English
- A minimum of 6 subjects with level 4 pass for diploma study and level 3 for Access Courses
- English Home Language or First Additional language, level 4 pass
- Specific subject combination and pass level relevant to the qualification; and
- Minimum points as per faculty requirement and as listed in the CAO handbook

## GENERAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Each faculty stipulates admission requirements based on points aggregate calculated from the best six subjects presented by the prospective student. Over and above the points system, some departments administer a compulsory entrance test.

## ADMISSION POINTS CALCULATION GUIDE

National Senior Certificate			Senior Certificate		
NSC Level Rating	NSC %	Points	Symbol	Higher Grade	Standard Grade
7	90 – 100	8	A	8	6
6	80 – 89	7	B	7	5
5	70 – 79	6	C	6	4
4	60 – 69	5	D	5	3
3	50 – 59	4	E	4	2
	40 – 49	3			

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# From the Editor-in-Chief

In 2018 we chose to focus our 7th MUT Empowered Administrators' Conference on the theme of "Embracing the Fourth Industrial Revolution". Setting the tone at the conference, I drew attention to the reality of people losing their jobs due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. I spoke about the shock an office administrator would feel on being told she or he is redundant. I asked what happens to someone with over 15 years' work experience whose responsibilities will now be performed by machines or absorbed by other employees. As a way of finding solutions, I looked at how best we as employees could start preparing to multi-task and work anywhere. I may have sounded like an alarmist at the time. Yet in less than two years, we have found ourselves in a predicament that once seemed fairly far away.



Mbali Mkhize

In retrospect, I wish we had taken this theme further and spoken about equipping ourselves to become more techno-savvy and more wired to perform our duties optimally, from anywhere. Today, I pen my thoughts in a world we never envisaged we would experience: LockdownSA. We are not alone in this; the entire world is in lockdown as a result of a brutal but invisible enemy.

I still watch the news, all channels from 400 to 406, and I am faced with the grief of the departed souls who I believe are resting in peace. I grieve even more for those still left behind, like you and I. Are we embracing a new way of working or are we waiting for the lockdown to vanish and go back to our old ways? Are we ready for the fast-changing world of the Fourth Industrial Revolution?

Unfortunately, there is no more turning back. The events of the past four weeks have shown us that digital transformation has to become a part of our culture – it is no longer a luxury. Look back at the very first industrial revolution and imagine how the ancestors felt about abandoning the Stone Age. Our transition is more brutal because it has come with such speed and a high human cost – yet there is also much to be gained if we embrace the transformation.

Having spent the entire period of Lockdown working as if things were normal, I can conclude that the fears we expressed in 2018 about embracing the Fourth Industrial Revolution, now need to be addressed. Some of the things I have had to navigate on my own include managing and locating various data, and understanding the power of online collaborations. (Believe me, the documents that my colleagues and I shared in the Cloud helped us to do so much and to trust one another.)

Moving into this new culture of adapting to work in the digital space, I have learned that planning my week, days and hours is more important than ever before. There are many distractions in the house but a culture of prioritisation has prevailed. I have learned in the space of three weeks what would have taken far longer without the lockdown, and this has reminded me how truly adaptable we are as people. While the new world may look daunting, we need not fear – we will survive together, and we will even thrive if we have the right spirit and mind set.

I hope this issue of the *MUT Spirit* inspires you along your own transformation journey. We have a great human – and institutional – spirit to be proud of.

# Reflections from the Vice-Chancellor

I have spoken to almost every MUT constituency since the beginning of the year about the need to transform our institutional culture at MUT. I have reiterated this message consistently during executive management meetings, in engagements with the Student Affairs Management Committee and during the State of the University address. Transforming our culture is key to our success in executing MUT Strategy 2025.



Dr Enoch Duma Malaza

With the unfortunate arrival of the novel Coronavirus on our shores, we find ourselves having to fast-track our transformation agenda.

In less than a month, the world has been turned upside down by COVID-19. To protect our students and staff, we took an early recess on 15 March and are currently under lockdown with the rest of South Africa. This has been a trying journey not only for the University leadership and the University Vice-Chancellors' Forum, but for parents who are now trying to assist their children to focus on their studies during this time. The general consensus is that we need to strengthen the partnership between students, parents and the University. No amount of data, online

learning and Call Centre response to queries will help our transformation agenda without taking on board our MUT Strategy 2025.

Our MUT Strategy 2025 should be used as the springboard towards transforming our culture. Its key elements provide answers on how we will do this. I refer to our core values, our leadership capability expectations, and our foundational themes. Reflecting on what it takes to transform our University, I find myself constantly coming back to these key elements. Let me walk you through them again so that we can win together.

Our core values as a University are: Accountability. Integrity. Respect. Excellence. These values define what MUT stands for and what we bring to work. We undertake to uphold them regardless of whether or not they are rewarded, and even if at some point they become a competitive disadvantage. This is the beginning of our journey towards excellence. Once we take a decision as staff and as students to live up to these core values, we would have embarked on the first step of our transformation agenda.

Our second step is to live up to leadership capability expectations. Our leadership values are known as the DEEDS and are committed to:

- ◆ ***"No amount of data, online***
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- ◆ ***response to queries will help***
- our transformation agenda***
- without taking on board our***
- MUT Strategy 2025."***



- ◆ **Deliver** on our obligations to one another, our students and stakeholders while maintaining high standards and ethical behaviour;
- ◆ **Engage** and collaborate with one another, our students and all stakeholders;
- ◆ **Empower** one another and our students to make a difference. MUT ensures the safety and wellbeing of our people. We create an inclusive and supportive university community in which achievements are celebrated and rewarded. Our people have the opportunity to enrich their lives and pursue their goals;
- ◆ **Discover** and share new knowledge and new ways to lead through teaching, intellectual engagement and use of technology; and
- ◆ **Sustain** our local and global environment, organisational health and ability to create a viable future.

The third aspect of our transformation agenda is to reinforce the foundational themes for MUT. These are the critical capabilities which MUT needs to develop for the success of our 2025 strategy. They point to the skills and perspectives needed to inform the culture within MUT and guide our role beyond the University. Our foundational themes are:

- ◆ **Transformative leadership:** critical thinking, analytical and reflective evaluation, and the ability to effect positive change;
- ◆ **Promoting diversity:** understanding and valuing differences among us. Enhancing our view of the world, how we express ourselves, relate to one another, and our intellectual and moral obligations; and

- ◆ **Globalisation:** technological, communicative, social, and cultural knowledge and skills to lead and succeed in the intensively connected global world.

Our transformation agenda is well documented in MUT Strategy 2025. The onus is now upon us to educate ourselves about our core values, leadership capability expectations and foundational themes for MUT. Would these change any of us? Yes. As I said during the State of the University address:

*"We must put our students first and ensure an environment conducive to learning and student success. The first-year students who are joining us for the first time are beginning a new life with new routines and new ways of thinking. Let us join them as they set out on this exciting journey. Let us help them to cope with new challenges and opportunities. From all our students, we expect a positive attitude towards study. They must demonstrate that they are ready to work hard – that they are not applying to MUT just to receive the NSFAS allowance and enjoy a social life. This is crucial in this era of a stagnant national economy which is attended by joblessness among our graduates and attractiveness of our institutions as places of sanctuary cushioned by NSFAS grants. We have to reassert our institution as a place for learning first and foremost."*

With or without COVID-19 threats, our transformation trajectory must be foregrounded by our ability to understand and execute our MUT Strategy.



# COVID-19 in focus



Muzi Khumalo

## MUT responds to COVID-19 to protect staff and students

This year will be remembered as the year the COVID-19 epidemic almost brought the world to a standstill. China was the first to be severely affected, but it was only a matter of time before positive cases of the disease appeared across the world, and Europe and the United States fast became no-go zones. The novel coronavirus arrived a little later in South Africa, with the first case announced on 5 March. The patient was from the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, an hour away from MUT by car.

For MUT, this first case was too close to home. Having tracked the virus' progress in Executive Management Committee meetings since mid-February, the University now sprang into action to protect the wellbeing of its staff and students.

The first step was for the University's Health Services to deliver a presentation to the EMC, the Student Affairs Management Committee and the University Senate. This was to enable the decision-makers to understand what the threat was about and thereafter cascade the information down to staff and students.

An MUT COVID-19 Task Team was then set up to advise the Vice-Chancellor on the disease and to map out various strategies that the University could adopt to protect its people. The Task Team, chaired by Mr Muzi Khumalo, senior director: Operations consists of representatives from various divisions of the University: Resources & Planning, Student Affairs, Occupational Health & Safety, Operations, Health Services, Marketing & Communications (MarComms) and Environmental Health. The MUT COVID-19 Task Team must be commended for its early interventions to safeguard the lives of students and staff.

Given the unavailability of a vaccine for the virus and its potential danger for older people and those with compromised health, it was vital and urgent to raise awareness about the virus and how to prevent its spread. Posters and flyers were immediately made available on the MUT campuses, in residences and on the buses that transport students to and from the University. The consistent message across social media platforms, WhatsApp and posters, was to wash hands every 20 minutes, practise social distancing, avoid hand shaking, and use elbows instead of hands when coughing. Sister Nomusa Mkhwanazi, Head of the MUT Clinic, attended a series of stakeholder engagement programmes organised by the Department of Health. “Her attendance helped provide accurate information about how we should communicate and immerse ourselves in the protocols of communicating this pandemic,” said Mbali Mkhize, Senior Director: Marketing and Communications.

Mkhize says that the MUT Brand Ambassadors quickly became Change Agents for the cause. They embarked on a week-long mission, moving from residence to residence distributing pamphlets on COVID-19 to students and the Umlazi community.

In addition to raising awareness via Sister Mkhwanazi and Dr Zodwa Ngobese’s presentations to the EMC, SRC, clinic staff, peer educators, peer helpers, house committees and student structures, the MUT Clinic played a key medical role. It used its facility to service staff and students and to screen patients with flu-like symptoms for the COVID-19 infection. It also provided immune boosters and flu vaccines to those in the HIV Wellness Programme as part of its medical interventions.

The Operations Directorate played a critical role in distributing hand sanitisers across the University. As part of its preventative measures, Operations also carried out the task of ensuring that all ventilation systems within the University were functioning optimally, and that the spaces into which the air-conditioning units extract are not used by staff and students.



Sister Nomusa Mkhwanazi

Following the declaration of COVID-19 as a national disaster by President Cyril Ramaphosa on Sunday, 15 March 2020, the MUT Senate met to discuss the implications of the President’s pronouncement. At this meeting Senate suspended all contact lectures, recommended that lectures be conducted online where possible, and limited access to the library.

On the basis of a 17 March directive by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, backed up by healthcare professionals, the MUT Senate proactively decided to move the University recess forward to 18 March 2020. The end date of the recess was moved from 15 to 17 April after the dates of the national lockdown were announced. South African students were given 72 hours to vacate University residences, while international students were provided with accommodation since they could not travel home. Graduation was also postponed. The University strengthened the use of Blackboard, which is an online tool to enhance teaching and learning. MUT staff continue to work from home, given the recent extension of the lockdown until the end of April.

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## Technology (and the TLDC) to the rescue to maintain teaching and learning

Addressing the media on 18 March 2020, MUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Enoch Duma Malaza, said the institution would use technology to ensure that teaching and learning continued despite the COVID-19 pandemic. “To reduce the heavy reliance on the contact mode of teaching, the University will strengthen its use of Blackboard, which is an online software to enhance teaching and learning,” said Dr Malaza.

The University’s Teaching and Learning Development Centre (TLDC) is at the coalface of this digital way of teaching and learning, and has crafted a plan that will be used to train MUT academics in the delivery of online lectures. Cebo Nyondo, E-learning and Educational Technology Specialist at the TLDC, said the plan was to capitalise on the current expertise available at the University by leveraging the experience of staff members that are already familiar with Blackboard (one of the technologies that MUT has been using for some time).

“In the current situation, the focus is on how the teaching and learning activities will be moved to an online environment, thereby implementing a distance learning approach. The TLDC is proposing a structure that will be followed for all courses. By way of implementation, we will provide training to all who require it during the recess period and will extend this initiative even after contact sessions resume,”



Cebo Nyondo

said Nyondo. He said the proposed structure adopts the “constructive alignment” approach advocated by Professor John B. Biggs. “This will help in developing courses that will mimic the nature of contact sessions and thereby create an interactive learning environment,” he concluded.

While it is true that the academic programme has been disrupted by the early autumn break and the COVID-19 lockdown, it has also become an opportunity for academics and administrative staff to use technology more actively to reduce the loss of contact time.

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- ◆ *become an opportunity for academics and administrative staff to use technology more actively to reduce the loss of contact time.”*

**We asked...**

## **“How has the COVID-19 lockdown transformed your culture and traditions?”**

The world has been thrown into turmoil as we have begun social distancing, washing hands at each and every interval, self-isolating from families and colleagues, and even watching people dying near and far. Surely this culture shock will have a huge bearing on our culture and traditions. We asked our MUT community to reflect on this, not simply as a nice-to-do exercise, but to help the executive note some challenges and opportunities that the lockdown has presented to us. Beyond that, we also wanted to reach out to our MUT community and get them engaged.



*Dr Enoch Duma Malaza*

### **Adjustments to working styles**

As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are having to rapidly adjust our way of working. We find ourselves having to move at breakneck speed into the digitalisation that has been spoken about so much. Although the scale of the challenge is currently too big for us, working remotely is helping us make the transition, thanks to technologies such as Skype and Microsoft Teams, as well as cloud-based process management tools. Having said that, there is a difference between being technically ready and being culturally and emotionally ready for this new world. A lot of training and support is needed to make us culturally and emotionally ready. We need technological support at the institutional level, technical support for staff, and psychological support for students.

### **MUT Vice-Chancellor, Dr Enoch Duma Malaza, weighs in...**

Firstly, I wish to express my gratitude for this initiative requesting us to reflect on how LockdownSA is transforming our way of life. I believe this activity will go a long way towards encouraging employee engagement at MUT.

### **Change in our behaviour as social animals**

The lockdown is a challenge because humans are social animals by nature. We are learning how to fare as individuals when isolated. The readiness of most people to self-quarantine or isolate is a demonstration of our capacity to think beyond personal interest and to voluntarily act in the interest of society's welfare. Yes, this pandemic is greatly changing our behaviour and options in terms of taking responsibility for our personal interests and those of the community.

### **The authority of science**

This pandemic is strengthening our belief in the rationality and objectivity of science. The strategy of flattening the curve is based on scientific analysis of data and conclusions informed by empirical laws. In this respect, religious bodies are ceding control to the authority of science.

## Quality of political leadership

Our politicians have responded well to the challenge. This is in sharp contrast to the policy indecision that characterised the national response to the HIV/AIDS problem in the 1990s. However, South Africa is woefully underprepared in terms of infrastructure. Implementation of the physical-distancing measures is nearly impossible given the living and transport infrastructure available for most black South Africans.

## The threat to cultural creative sectors

The impact on cultural and creative sectors is immense. Multinational companies as well as small companies and freelance professionals essential for the sector are facing an uncertain future. This crisis creates a structural threat to the survival of many

firms and workers in cultural and creative production. The availability of cultural content contributes to the mental health and wellbeing of our population, and many cultural institutions have provided online and free content in recent weeks for that purpose. All of this is under threat.

## The fragility of the South African economy

Lastly, and more significantly, the impact on the South African economy, already relegated to junk status by major rating agencies, will be immense. My fear is that we might not have an economy after this pandemic. The IMF might have to assist us to put the pieces together.

# Staff members reflect...

## Mbali Mkhize, Senior Director: Marketing and Communications

My first observation, even before the University took an early recess, was how quickly we were all adapting to the elbow greeting. South Africans in general, depending on age, greet by shaking hands or giving each other a hug. It was quite endearing to see students doing elbow greetings and laughing about that. It showed that while the elbow may not be so intimate, the camaraderie between people still exists.

Never before has the world seen so much washing of hands. Someone commented jokingly that even Pontius Pilate never washed his hands so many times. The washing of hands has always been sacrosanct. Even in church, priests wash hands before serving bread. In the public health sector, the washing of hands is what health professionals have been advocating for many years. Many infections are transmitted by hands, and this marks a watershed moment where we take hygiene back into our lives.

The social distancing part is heartbreaking for many families. Many are used to spending weekend lunches together. While it was brutal at the beginning, my sister came up with an idea that the family could still be 'together' on Sundays. We agreed that we



*Mbali Mkhize*

would wake up to attend a virtual mass together through live streaming. Being in different provinces and even abroad for some family members, we felt this togetherness as we prayed together. Six hours later, we would then live-stream family dinners. We would all agree on a recipe the day before and as we live-streamed our dinners, we would joke about whose presentation looks best. This has been a true communion for us and we hope that we will continue to do this beyond the lockdown. We have had to get together as families virtually and started paying attention to one another.





*Dr Thobile Poswa*

## Dr TT Poswa, HOD, Environmental Health

As a pastor, this lockdown has emboldened me to become more resolute about my faith. I have spent days selecting verses from the Bible that will console those suffering during this time and bring more people closer to our Lord. There has been more focus on praying for the nation using communal prayer over personal prayer, using prayer as a weapon for all humankind to approach Him. In my live-stream services, I have said that we must forget about our divisions and camps; let us all pray as a nation and work together to find a lasting solution. This disastrous situation is making us forget our self-interests and look at our interests as a nation.

## Amid lockdown, USSA Champ continues training

The residents of Glencoe, a small mining town near Dundee in northern KwaZulu-Natal, recently got used to a familiar sight of one Sandile Dlamini (22), a second-year Accounting student, running on the street every day, including the weekends. This was part of his training schedule as he prepared for the next major challenges in his boxing career. Sandile, like all other MUT students, had to leave the University after the national state of disaster was declared and students were sent home to limit the spread of the coronavirus.

Sandile became the USSA Boxing Champion in the 56kg category in Mpumalanga in December 2019 and is currently preparing for the Zone Four Games in Botswana in June, followed by another one in the US in December this year – provided they go ahead, given the COVID-19 outbreak.

Refusing to lose ground during the lockdown, Sandile is still training hard, albeit differently. “I do physical training from Monday to Fridays. On Thursdays and Fridays I do workouts that is boxing, punching bag, pad work, and sparring. What I am preparing for is an opportunity of a lifetime that does not fall onto anybody’s lap,” he said.

Sandile added that he was mentally strong enough to deal with the uncertainty that comes with the coronavirus. He said he draws strength from motivational speaker, Eric Thomas, who said that it is better to be prepared for an opportunity and not have



*Sandile Dlamini, right, and his trainer, Nkosinathi Mkhaliphi showing off the trophy and medal Sandile won at the 2019 USSA Games*

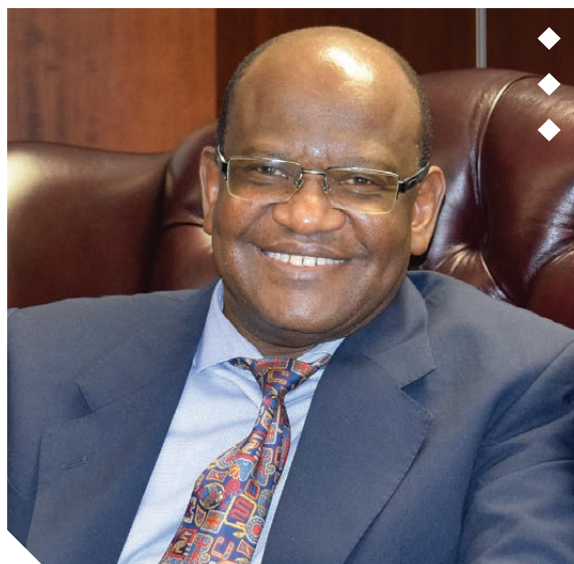
one, than to have an opportunity but not be prepared for it. The highly disciplined Sandile heard Eric saying this while he was doing Grade 12, in 2017.

At the moment Sandile is under the guidance of his former mentors Nkosinathi Hlatshwayo and Nkosinathi Thusi, as he is forced to live away from his MUT trainer Nkosinathi Mkhaliphi, who lives in Mtubatuba, northern KwaZulu-Natal, and coach Sifiso Ngiba, who lives in Durban. Hlatshwayo and Thusi are very proud of his achievements. Sandile has been boxing for 11 years.

# State of the University Address

## VC uses SOTU to set the university on a strategic path

Every year, the MUT Vice-Chancellor delivers the State of the University (SOTU) address to staff, setting the tone for what the University wants to achieve for the year. Ever since joining MUT, Dr Enoch Duma Malaza has referred to Strategy 2025 which was co-developed with staff and students. This year's SOTU was special for two reasons. The MUT Strategy 2025, whose development Dr Malaza championed, had been approved for implementation by the MUT Council in 2019, and 2020 was the first year of its implementation.



Dr Enoch Duma Malaza

"In 2019 we concluded a long journey which started in the middle of 2018. We now have a strategic blueprint to steer by as we chart the way into the future," said Dr Malaza, addressing staff at Bozzoli Hall, which was filled to capacity. "Our MUT Strategy 2025 commits us to the creation of a beautiful university that future generations will be proud of."

Recapping the goals of Strategy 2025, Dr Malaza highlighted some of the priorities for 2020. The milestones that the University wanted to achieve by the end of the year include playing a significant role in strengthening civil society, partnering with the community as part of the MUT 'Anchor Strategy', reviewing the MUT Campus Master Plan, implementing the new organisational structure, and strengthening the capacity of support departments to deliver on key services of the University.

As part of the address, which was delivered on 17 February, Dr Malaza told staff that the University aimed to deepen its role of strengthening civil society by providing 'knowledge and understanding', shaping cultural values, and training and socialising people on the new economic and social era of the Fourth

Industrial Revolution (4IR)". He went on to explain that this role committed the University to providing knowledge and skills required to meet the challenges of sustainable development, and to enable members of the community to make informed, ethical choices.

In terms of partnering with the community through MUT's Anchor Strategy, Dr Malaza informed staff that the University planned to establish an Anchor Committee. This committee will provide a platform for establishing relationships with partners from the community.

The MUT Campus Master Plan, which is its plan for sustainable development in infrastructure, will also be reviewed this year. In terms of infrastructure projects, the University has a few key projects earmarked for 2020. "These include the completion of the student centre, the redesign of the main entrance as a pedestrian area with a link to the land on the west side of the main road, and the reconfiguration of the entrance to the Technology Station in Chemicals as the new main entrance to the University," said Dr Malaza.





*The 2020 SOTU was well attended by staff*

Dr Malaza also informed staff that the University had started the difficult task of implementing the new organisational structure at the top level of the University, and that the human resources consultancy, HRTouch, was working with MUT to ensure that a robust change management framework is followed.

In terms of strengthening support departments and divisions to deliver on key services of the University, Dr Malaza explained that MUT was repositioning the Procurement Unit to improve its expertise and capacity. He also highlighted the Information Technology and Networks Department (ITN) and the Directorate for Institutional Planning and Research (DIPR) as requiring repositioning to enhance the University's information technology and business analytics capabilities.

Dr Malaza also called on staff to put MUT students first and to create an environment that will enable students to succeed in their studies at the University. He appealed to staff to help new students starting off their academic journey, to cope with the challenges that come with being university students and to embrace the opportunities that the institution offers.

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*and skills for global*  
*citizenship."*

learning that enables them to build strong professional identities, equipping them with future-focused graduate capabilities and skills for global citizenship," said Dr Malaza. "The key initiatives are the design of a programme on enriching the experience of first-year students and the implementation of a framework that embeds entrepreneurship into the curriculum."

The Vice-Chancellor's address was followed by the launch of the MUT Strategy 2025.



# Introducing MUT's brand new corporate identity

## Building our brand identity from the ground up

### In the words of our Vice-Chancellor & Principal

It is a great honour to launch a new Corporate Identity for Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) during its 40-year anniversary. What makes this the greatest honour is also the fact that the Founding Father of MUT, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, was central to the 40-year celebrations and visited MUT three times as an honoured guest.

Our Corporate Identity is being launched at the time when we have developed MUT Strategy 2025 which will steer the University through a period that will be characterised by a rapidly evolving and increasingly competitive higher education environment and on-going changes in national policy, including reform of the regulatory environment. Branding and reputation management will play a pivotal role in positioning MUT as a University of Technology, as promulgated in 2007 by the Minister of Education. There has been a lot of talk about decolonised education and our previous logo was represented by a coat of arms.

MUT has grown in academic stature and is well-positioned to attain the Vision we have set ourselves for 2025: "To be a transforming, equitable, sustainable and academically excellent University of Technology anchored in its communities". The Vision is an expression of a commitment to grow in academic stature; be fair and inclusive; grow in harmony with our resources; and grow together with our communities.

With our strategy statement being, "shape and own the future", I believe that the new Corporate Identity signals a new aspiration for the University in how it wants to be perceived by its stakeholders. Please take time to read and understand the guidelines on how to use our logo, typefaces, corporate colours, stationery and page layout templates, so that we may



always present a unified, consistent and immediately recognisable face to all our stakeholders.

I wish to thank all of you for embarking on the campaign, "Constructing our future identity". Just remember that by using our CI appropriately, you are raising our profile through various touchpoints.



## Getting the University dressed in its new identity

The beginning of 2020 was not like the beginning of any other year for the Department of Marketing and Communications (MarComms). A successful launch of the new MUT Corporate Identity (CI) in December set in motion the difficult task of ensuring that the University starts using its first new corporate identity in 40 years. This meant ensuring that every document that has MUT's name on it had to bear the new logo and follow the prescripts of the new look and feel.

"Launching our new CI was only the beginning of a long process of ensuring that MUT bears this new identity," said Mbali Mkhize, Senior Director at MarComms. "The beginning of the year offered a valuable opportunity to implement this identity as university processes start for the year."

The majority of MUT students had already left the University when the new CI was launched in December. Although they could not have missed the news, they were going to come face-to-face with their new logo for the first time. For returning students, the logo would not be completely new because they had participated in the surveys that led to its development, and had been on campus when the new logo was voted on. For first-time registering students, the logo would be completely fresh.

For MUT staff, the logo was all too familiar at this stage. It was only a matter of how to use it and where to find templates for all its uses. As with any change, it takes time for people to get used to it. But time was a commodity that MarComms did not have. The longer MarComms waited in guiding the University through this transition, the longer the uptake of the new corporate identity would take.

"Our mandate was to get every employee to start using the new CI on all official university documents," said



Mkhize. "All MUT documents had to be dressed in this new identity and it was upon us to make this process easy for staff, especially secretaries who use these documents with their line managers."

To streamline this process of helping staff to use the new CI, MarComms established a Brand Helpdesk. Staff now had a dedicated place to go and find their colleagues who would help them with their brand use needs. It was here that the Brand Police, armed with their knowledge of the new CI and how it should be used, waited to help staff to make the transition smoother.

Branding is about consistency not only in university documents and apparel, but also in the email signatures of every staff member. Email signatures hold the key to representing the MUT brand appropriately internally and outside the University. Using the new logo, MarComms developed new signatures for use by all MUT staff. Instructions on how to download the template and to add one's information to it were circulated. This second layer of consistency required the Brand Police to visit staff offices and help staff who are less techno-savvy than others with updating their signatures to stay on brand.

The Brand Police continue to visit brand newbies and offenders, and signs bearing the old MUT logo are gradually being replaced by ones carrying the new logo. The task of dressing MUT in its new identity continues.

# Orientation 2020

## First-Year Orientation plants seeds of social responsibility among students

Research shows that the first year at university is a crucial period for young people, posing numerous challenges but also serving as opportunities for growth and development. The general First-Year Orientation programme at MUT takes cognizance of first-year student needs by offering them a holistic orientation experience. On 14 and 15 February 2020, the University hosted first-year students at Seme Hall for orientation into their new 'home' over the next three or four years.

Dr Paulette Naidoo, Director of Student Counselling in the Department of Student Affairs, pointed out that this year's Orientation Programme "aimed to promote a cohort of civic-minded, socially-responsible first-year students who take responsibility for themselves and their communities". Formal, theoretical and practical aspects of civic and social responsibility were incorporated into the First-Year Orientation programme, and contextualised in terms of student volunteerism. Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni, Director of the Institute for Rural Development and Community Engagement (IRDCE), unpacked the concepts of community engagement and student volunteerism for students, highlighted the range of projects which different units at MUT are involved in, and gave examples of student volunteerism in action.

The programme also encouraged students to use their initiative and implement their own student volunteer projects and activities. Dr Naidoo introduced the volunteer Peer Helpers initiative to first-year students, pointing out that the senior students in this Student Counselling initiative served as positive examples of student volunteerism.

The platform was also an important opportunity to introduce students to a Commitment Register which they could complete if they were interested in pursuing



*Happy to join MUT!*

student volunteerism projects. Many students in the audience completed the Register, expressing a keen interest in and commitment to giving back to their communities and the University in the duration of their stay.

It would not have been a complete orientation without a tour of the campus, where students were invited to participate in the 'Love Your Campus Clean-Up Campaign'. This campaign saw students combining their love for MUT and their passion for volunteering as they collectively cleaned the campus. Students responded with enthusiasm and together with the Peer Helpers went around campus picking up dirt to keep their University clean.



## Student Counselling welcomes the 2020 Peer Helpers

There is no denying the value of Peer Helpers, especially in the context of universities. A quick search on Google reveals the popularity of this approach in universities across the world. Mangosuthu University of Technology is no exception. Every year, the Student Counselling Unit within the Student Affairs Department welcomes a cohort of students who serve as Peer Helpers, extending the Unit's reach to fellow students across the University and its residences. It is this ability to connect with fellow students in a way that staff cannot, that makes Peer Helpers an important part of the Student Counselling Unit. At MUT the Peer-Help Programme (PHP) is a student volunteer programme initiative.

MUT Student Counsellor, Lungi Mkhize, is the co-ordinator of the PHP and is passionate about student development and peer helping. "At the end of every year, we embark on a recruitment drive for the following year's Peer Helpers," explained Mkhize. "Recruitment for the 2020 Peer Helper Programme began at the end of 2019 and concluded in February 2020."

Only registered MUT students who are in their second to fourth year of study are eligible to apply, as per the advertisements on posters across campus and on official MUT social media platforms.

"We look for students who can set good examples and influence their peers positively," said Mkhize. "These are students who are passionate about people and helping others, who are motivated and enthusiastic, who have good listening and interpersonal skills, who have a good academic record, and who are interested in community work."

This year, the Unit formally inducted 71 Peer Helpers into the programme and took them through the first phase of compulsory training on 29 February, which laid the foundation for the work that will be expected in the duration of their time with the Unit. The training focused on introducing students to the concept of Peer Helping; the qualities of a Peer Helper; ethics, values and principles of Peer Helping (confidentiality, code of conduct, professionalism, branding); standard working procedures; communication skills; listening skills; empathy; facilitation skills; and Emotional Intelligence. The content of this training is revised annually to accommodate Peer Helper needs, challenges, and emerging patterns and trends amongst the student



*Students participate in group discussion during Peer Helper training*

community that require additional skills development and knowledge acquisition.

"Peer Helper training is a critical component of the Peer Helper Programme as students often seek help from peers when they have personal problems," said Mkhize. "The Programme contributes to Goal 5 of the MUT Strategic Plan 2025: To create an enabling support environment."

Future training programmes will follow later in the semester to further capacitate Peer Helpers to fulfil their mandate in accordance with their roles.

## MUT takes major step to curb first year drop-out rate

Being a first-year student at a university is quite daunting. In its message to students wanting to study at a US college or university, the US Embassy refers to a “culture shock” that foreign students have to deal with. The same is true even when students have enrolled in higher education institutions in their own country. The level of discomfort, confusion and frustration can be so significant that some

students decide to drop out. This has happened increasingly over time, eating into the number of students that graduate every year. This is a sore point for both higher education institutions and the government. MUT’s Teaching and Learning Development Centre (TLDC) has taken a decision to tackle the problem head-on through the ‘First Year Experience (FYE)’ programme. The TLDC is spearheading the project, but it is important to note that the FYE project is an umbrella that unifies all initiatives and interventions that focus on first-year students. As such, it is led by an MUT FYE team that comprises representatives of all the University stakeholders.

Giving more reasons for the project, Arthi Ramrung of the TLDC said that the FYE is an international movement towards intentionally focusing on first-time-entering students, with the aim of addressing a number of challenges such as high drop-out rates and poor performance of students in their first year of study. “MUT has made a step towards creating a more supportive environment for our first-year students. We intend to improve how we engage and support our students through a coordinated programme that will allow all stakeholders to acknowledge their roles in a first-year student’s life,” said Ramrung. She went on to say that MUT defines its FYE programme as an intentional and relevant institutional programme aimed at ensuring that first-year-entering students are exposed to stimulating, holistic and enriching curricular and co-curricular activities. “The programme will among other things, help students to transition seamlessly from school to university and create a sense of belonging, with a view to attaining the desired MUT graduate attributes.”



*Students were happy with what they gained from the presenters*

- ◆ “It is important that the FYE
- ◆ programme not be looked at
- ◆ as a separate entity but as an important part of the MUT students’ journey.”

The response of students towards some of the new workshops has been encouraging; a large number of first-year students attended the first round of programmes. The FYE project will be rolled out in phases. Ramrung said that they have introduced new interventions such as faculty orientation and digital literacy workshops; they have also introduced student academic advisors who are meant to guide students along their journey. They are currently developing an MUT FYE programme which will be called GPS (Getting Prepared for Success), which the TLDC hopes will help the students navigate the University and their studies simultaneously. Ramrung said they hoped to launch the programme to students in 2021. The TLDC also has a number of developments that it envisages in the programme.

“As we compete with the limited time in a semester, it is important to note that a lot of the engagement that we wish to have with first-year students will have to be somehow integrated into their timetables. It is important that the FYE programme not be looked at as a separate entity but as an important part of the MUT students’ journey,” concluded Ramrung.



# MUT anchors the community

## 2020 Circle of Excellence awards reinforce MUT Anchor Strategy – and Umalusi takes note

A key aspect of MUT's Strategy 2025 is its goal of entrenching itself as an anchor in the community of Umlazi, in order to develop the township. Playing a key role in this is the annual Circle of Excellence (COE) awards, a prestigious event through which the University recognises and encourages the top-performing Umlazi Township high schools based on their Grade 12 results in the previous year. By extension, the COE awards also affirm the hard work and dedication of the teachers. Zama Sishi, Director of Stakeholder Relations in the University's Department of Marketing and Communications, said the event sends a strong message that the toil of teachers to transform society through education is not in vain, and that the University cares about the schools. "We are proud to be offering the Circle of Excellence awards for the seventh time this year. It is encouraging to see that our township schools have embraced the spirit of competition in pursuit of excellence," said Sishi.



Over the years the COE has grown in stature to the point that it features strongly in the calendar of the University and the schools themselves. From the time it was initiated, the COE has served as a strong link between the schools and the University. The underlying philosophy is that there should not be any gulf between high school education and university education; the two systems must be joined. The COE has helped to close this gap, thanks to the sterling leadership of the Department of Marketing and Communications, which drives the COE every year.

The noble role of the COE in both the school and university systems has been highlighted by the support the event has enjoyed from the local Department of Education since its inception. This support has given the event the image that it deserves, and over the years it has attracted the attention of some major players in the education sector. In 2020 it was attended by none other than Dr Mafu Rakometsi, the Chief Executive Officer of Umalusi, the quality assurance body for General and Further Education and Training. Dr Rakometsi said he was "truly humbled" by being



Dr Mafu Rakometsi at the COE



invited to be a guest speaker at the COE. In his speech, Dr Rakometsi emphasised the centrality of schools as centres whose main duty is “to prepare learners conceptually or emotionally to play a meaningful role in society or the workplace or in the development of the values to function in a responsible and humane way within society”, among other things. He added that “society often has unrealistic and un-educational expectations of what schools are meant to do. Based on this, people simply draw conclusions that schools

have failed. A good school is a site for learning. It is so often the case that schools, rather than being learning organisations, are in fact ‘knowing organisations’.”

The 7th annual COE awards in 2020 acknowledged the schools’ exemplary performance in Accounting, English, Mathematics and Physical Science. Next year this line-up will include Sports excellence within Umlazi Township schools.

## COE thriving through generous sponsorships



*Mason Lincoln School teacher with one of the sponsors, Ahmed Motala, second from left, from New Africa Education Foundation, and MUT and DoE officials*

Generous sponsorships by corporate partners have enabled MUT to provide Umlazi Township’s top-performing schools with educational resources that they can use to both strengthen themselves and share with underperforming peers. MUT’s engagements with surrounding schools in terms of its Anchor Strategy have revealed an impressive culture of hard work among both primary and high schools in Umlazi Township. If only the schools could have an abundance of resources, the quality of education would be unimaginable. This is what has motivated MUT in appealing to corporate sponsors to be a strategic partner in the rollout of MUT’s schools anchor projects.

The impact of MUT’s Circle of Excellence awards is a key example of this partnership in action. Their impact has been vastly amplified by the educational and teaching resources donated by corporate sponsors. One long-standing sponsor is the Willowton Group, a leading FMCG company based in Pietermaritzburg. They have sponsored science laboratory resources and mobile laboratories to the tune of more than R300 000 which we believe has contributed greatly to the excellent performance of the Umlazi Township schools. At the recent 2020 Circle of Excellence awards ceremony on 13 March, Willowton sponsored a Natural Science mobile laboratory for Grades 8 to 10, as well as 110 Oxford dictionaries to enhance the teaching of English.

The Iqraa Trust, a humanitarian organisation that has partnered with MUT in a number of schools empowerment and disaster relief programmes, sponsored R25 000. The Iqraa Trust was represented by its chairman, Dr Mahmoud Youssef Baker, who has become a benefactor of MUT school empowerment projects such as literacy, aid relief during the storms and support for Maths education.

Gem School Wear has been partnering with MUT since 2017 in both its COE and other school empowerment projects. They have sponsored laptops, school uniforms, gift vouchers, and in March this year provided a R20 000 sponsorship for the top achieving and most improved schools, presented by Managing Director, Mr Idris Pandor. "The social problems our country is facing are crying out aloud, especially in the education sector. As a company we believe in the notion 'GIVE AS YOU EARN' as a token of appreciation to our valued customers," said Mr Pandor.

Each year the COE organisers work hard to spread the net to more corporate sponsors, and this year they were thrilled to welcome new sponsors on board to support matric excellence in Umlazi Township. One of these was Vodacom South Africa, which funded tablets for five Accounting teachers, as well as providing fifteen hampers to acknowledge principals'

- ◆ *"Each year the COE organisers*
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- Township."*

strong leadership of their respective schools – a key factor in the outstanding school results. Edwin Lebuso, Marketing Specialist: Youth at Vodacom, has already identified a number of projects for future collaboration with MUT, such as youth and women empowerment, rolling out e-learning platforms at schools in the township, and sharing a number of Vodacom youth benefit programmes with MUT students.

To support the teaching of science and contribute to improving results in this core subject, JVL Lab Supplies sponsored science laboratory supplies. These were presented by Jeremy Nagiah to Sishosonke High School which improved their results from 40,63% to 90% in 2019.



A teacher from Velabahleke, middle, with Mr Idris Pandor, second from left, and MUT and DoE officials



## Menzi High School ranked second in South Africa

The jewel of Umlazi Township, Menzi High School, was recognised by Basic Education Minister, hon. Ms Angie Motshekga, during the National Education Excellence Awards, held in Pretoria on 13 March 2020 to recognise last year's outstanding matric performance. This school from the humble township was represented by its principal, Ms Muntu Ntombela.

For many years Menzi High School has been serving learners from mostly underprivileged communities. Through its unmatched excellence, the school is creating a legacy of quality education that will go down in history long after those responsible have gone. At the awards, Menzi High School was ranked second among South Africa's quintile 3 schools. The awards celebrate excellence in district and school performance, focusing on schools that have contributed to an improvement in mathematics, physical sciences and bachelor passes over the past five years.

Addressing the audience at the awards, Minister Motshekga said, "You are living proof of the wise words of Ralph Marston who said: 'Excellence is not an act but a habit'. You have displayed a zeal to adhere



*Principal of Menzi High School, Muntu Ntombela, left, and Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga*



*High achievers! Menzi High School teachers, second to fifth from left, with MUT's DVC: Teaching and Learning, Professor Marcus Ramogale, and DoE's Nhlanhla Shandu*



to the core business of the schooling system which is quality learning. Go forth and conquer the world and keep up your excellent work.” The Department of Basic Education report published on 8 January indicated that Menzi High School was amongst the 104 schools in South Africa to achieve a 100% pass rate consistently for a period of five years – of which only 16 are in KwaZulu-Natal. This was out of a total of 25,154 schools that wrote the National Senior Certificate examinations in 2019.

In 2019, Menzi High School had a total of 151 learners writing the NSC exam, with 141 achieving Bachelor passes, 8 achieving Diploma passes and 2 achieving

Higher Certificate passes. The class of 2019 praised their teachers for working hard in preparing them for the exams, and were also proud to uphold the school’s reputation. Principal Ntombela said, “It is all a team effort. I am very proud of the many sacrifices by the teachers and the entire staff of Menzi High who sacrifice their family time making sure that all learners, including those that are weaker than others, receive good quality marks. These teachers do not have weekends and school holidays. They are at school teaching as if it was a normal school day. To the staff, I am very thankful and appreciate your dedication, respect and support to the management of the school.”

## Double honours for top Umlazi school

As the saying goes, there is no rest for the weary. This was the case for Muntu Ntombela, principal of Menzi High School, who had to travel from the National Education Excellence Awards in Pretoria straight to the Hilton Hotel in Durban to attend the MUT Circle of Excellence Awards on the same day. The theme for the COE awards was “quality education”, and that certainly resonated with Menzi High School, which left with a huge collection of awards on the evening of 13 March 2020: five trophies, cash sponsorship to the value of R15 000 as well as other educational and individual prizes.

Menzi High School was once again celebrated as the top performer in Umlazi Township, as they have been for the past seven years of the Circle of Excellence awards. The school was also rewarded for achieving a 100% pass rate in Accounting, Physical Sciences and English; a 98% pass rate in Mathematics; and an overall pass rate of 100%, with a total of 280 distinctions and 141 bachelor passes.

The outstanding work of the leadership, teachers, and learners of Menzi High School was lauded by the KZN MEC for education, Mr Kwazi Mshengu during the Menzi High school matric excellence awards early in the year at the Durban ICC. “I want to especially thank the principal and the school management team for the sound leadership of the school. When Ms Ntombela took leadership after the untimely passing of Mr Mshololo, there were a lot of sceptics considering the nature of patriarchy in our society. Please continue with your good work, I am extremely impressed with what is taking place at Menzi. We need Menzi High School



*“We compete with ourselves,” Muntu Ntombela, Menzi High School Principal*

learners to help our country in fighting epidemics and finding solutions to fight climate change,” said MEC Mshengu.

The MEC’s wishes are already being realised as six learners from the class of 2019 have been accepted at Nelson Mandela University (NMU) to do medicine. Four from the class of 2014 have completed their medical degree at NMU, and one in Cuba, while another four are due to complete their studies this year at UKZN’s Nelson R. Mandela School of Medicine.

MUT views its relationship with schools in the immediate surrounding as a bold step towards the revitalisation of Umlazi Township. The many pockets of excellence that exist amongst the schools in Umlazi are a good indication that the efforts of MUT, together with its partners, are bearing fruit towards creating an education ecosystem in the township.

## National top achiever accommodated by MUT

The name Bayanda Mahlaba graced every publication when he defied the odds to become one of the national top achievers in the 2019 National Senior Certificate exams. Bayanda, who is doing his first year of Mechanical Engineering at MUT, did not have an easy matric journey as he was the victim of crime at his home in Inanda. Being raised by an unemployed single mother who had to struggle to make ends meet brought many challenges during his formative years, but the biggest hurdle of his life has been funding his tertiary education. Although he was a national top achiever with 100% for technical mathematics, and placed third nationally for technical sciences which he passed with 90%, he was facing the possibility of staying at home as none of the funding institutions would give him a chance. Bayanda's case is one of the sad realities that many young top achievers are faced with.

Luckily for Bayanda, it was his outstanding results and MUT's community-mindedness that changed his situation. One of the local media houses sent an email to MUT's stakeholder engagement office to enquire about the possibility of MUT funding his studies and assisting him with a space. "As soon as I saw Bayanda's matric results I knew that he is exactly the type of student MUT wants in its student records. A quick email to the head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering resulted in him being given a firm offer – but then there was the issue of funding. Fortunately for him, he met the criteria set for the alumni bursary fund which was launched in 2016 by a group of alumni who also studied engineering at MUT," said Zama Sishi, Director: Stakeholder Relations Management at MUT. Bayanda's mom broke into tears



*Bayanda Mahlaba with Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga*

of joy when she heard that MUT was able to assist her son with registration and accommodation fees.

Ayanda Bulose, Schools Liaison Assistant in the Marketing and Communications Department, was assigned to assist Bayanda to navigate successfully through the MUT registration process, which he did with great care and professionalism. Ayanda has become a brother and mentor to Bayanda, who had at some point lost hope that he would ever see himself starting his tertiary studies in the first semester of 2020. Understanding the depth of his job as a student recruitment officer, Ayanda has approached a couple of funding opportunities and successfully secured a full sponsorship bursary that will fund Bayanda until he completes his Mechanical Engineering diploma. The student recruitment team at MUT have grasped the advantages of targeting better performing students and are making sure to exploit every opportunity to get the best students recruited and registered at MUT.



**MUT STRATEGY 2025 IN ACTION:**  
Excellence in teaching and  
learning  
(Goal 1)



**MUT STRATEGY 2025 IN ACTION:**  
Excellence in research,  
innovation and  
engagement  
(Goal 2)

## Community Extension senior lecturer collaborates with Let's Food Cities

The National Development Plan (NDP) is South Africa's blueprint of what the country wants to achieve by 2030 and how this will be achieved. One aspect is addressing food insecurity through agriculture and rural development. The Department of Community Extension at MUT has long been working with the community through various agricultural projects aimed at capacitating members of the Umlazi Township in correct agricultural practices that will aid in growing crops for food.



*Xoli Mkhize, second from left, with French researchers*

To continue these efforts against food insecurity, Xolile Mkhize, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Community Extension, hosted a delegation from the Let's Food Cities organisation as part of their visit to Durban to conduct a study on the Durban food system. According to its website, Let's Food Cities is a French NGO which works to "raise awareness for and support local governments around the world as they pursue a shift to sustainable, territory-based food systems, using international cooperation between cities as leverage".

The study in Durban is part of a bigger project by the French NGO. Let's Food Cities has paired seven French cities to seven cities from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East in an effort to reinforce international partnerships with local governments on the subject of food and to share experiences. Durban is paired with the French city of Nantes.

The delegation from France was studying the Durban food system in order to compile an assessment report on how cities around the world are looking at addressing urban food security in a time of rapid urbanisation. Mkhize was identified as one of the stakeholders who are part of the City's programme in addressing food insecurity. She contributed her knowledge and expertise to the research, and also took the delegation on a field tour around various food

stakeholders in Umlazi Township who play a major role in ensuring food access within the township.

Mkhize also led the delegation to the informal settlements to conduct a situational analysis on food consumption patterns in relation to strategies for providing access to food production. "The gap between the rich and poor is growing, affecting food security in the city. Access to income is a major factor," said Mkhize. "Street vendors are key in accessing food, as opposed to fresh produce markets. Student food access is also influenced by those markets, including the fast food industry."

The eThekweni Municipality has a responsibility to address challenges faced by an urbanising society whilst ensuring the regional food system is functional and promotes urban agriculture. Umlazi Township is key to these efforts because a significant part of the overall municipal population resides in it; and since the majority of the Umlazi Township population lives below the poverty line, there is a high level of food insecurity on the MUT's doorstep.

Mkhize's participation in this research collaboration between Let's Food Cities and eThekweni Municipality will ensure that as a major anchor of the city, Umlazi Township benefits from the City's efforts.



## MUT alumni take a stand against wildlife trafficking

Trafficking in wildlife threatens to obliterate some animal species if it is left to continue. According to a 2019 report by the non-profit organisation, Environmental Investigation Agency, the global population of elephants is at the lowest it has ever been in 25 years owing to the illegal ivory trade. The rise in rhino poaching since 2006 threatens to wipe out the rhino population in South Africa, which is home to three quarters of the African population of rhinos. The situation is worse for pangolin species which are being trafficked at an alarming rate, according to the report.

As part of World Wildlife Day (3 March), MUT Nature Conservation alumni returned to their alma mater to talk about their work in combating wildlife poaching and trafficking in various sectors. In a session organised by the Department of Nature Conservation, MUT alumni delivered presentations on various threats to wildlife and how some of those threats could be managed or neutralised.

Joe Phadima, Executive Manager of Conservation Services at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, was the first keynote speaker and focused on the role that biodiversity policy could play in safeguarding both animal and plant species. He explained that as a developmental state, South Africa's biggest challenge was to develop its economy and people. Phadima further explained that the challenge was to develop in a manner that would not damage the environment. "Our action will determine the future of our biodiversity," he said. He credited the success of his organisation to biodiversity policy taking a central role in their work.

MUT alumnus, Jabulani Ngubane, followed with a detailed presentation on his organisation's work in guarding South Africa's most famous endangered animal, the rhino. Ngubane is an Executive at the Isimangaliso Wetland Park, where his organisation is tasked with protecting the wellbeing of rhinos against poachers. Ngubane informed the audience that the threat of poaching was always imminent and very real. Last year, he explained, 133 rhinos were killed by poachers.



*Masiko Buthelezi, Jabulani Ngubane, and Joe Phadima*

In an environment where poaching is becoming a sophisticated and lucrative crime fuelled by growing consumer demand and increasing consumer purchasing power in Vietnam, protecting rhinos might be high on the list of challenging jobs. The challenges, according to Ngubane, include dealing with a high profile syndicate of poachers; high financial incentives for poachers, who are constantly changing strategies; a lack of information on syndicates from security agencies; low conviction rates for poachers; and inadequate funding for the required equipment to be used against poachers.

To solve some of these challenges, Isimangaliso Wetland Park has resorted to establishing intensive Protection Zones, aerial surveillance with night vision goggle capabilities, establishment of a nerve centre, polygraph tests for staff, and temporary measures such as dehorning smaller populations of rhinos, among others.

Another MUT alumnus, Masiko Buthelezi, occupies an important position in fighting wildlife trafficking. He is in charge of wildlife export and import at OR Tambo International Airport, where traffickers try their luck in smuggling wildlife in and out of South Africa. Buthelezi showed the audience various ways in which traffickers attempt to smuggle wildlife at the airport. Buthelezi highlighted the value of understanding the laws that regulate the transportation of wildlife and conservation law.

The session ended with a response from Nature Conservation students before a lively debate on trafficking.

# MUT continues to stand against gender-based violence



*MUT students listening to Leticia Sishi, and other speakers*

## Black Thursday against GBV

For MUT, a key imperative at the beginning of 2020 was to act on Senate's decision to take a strong stand against Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Senate's commitment was aimed at establishing MUT as an anti-GBV institution and create awareness about the scourge.

On Thursday, 13 February 2020, the Department of Marketing and Communications at MUT launched the "Black Thursday against GBV" Campaign to raise awareness amongst staff and students, and to encourage the staff and students who might be victims of any abuse to report it. To contribute to the experience, poets, wordsmiths and singers in the MUT student population used the opportunity to showcase their talent.

The campaign was an important starting point, given many South African institutions' making news headlines for losing students to GBV. Mbali Mkhize, Senior Director: Marketing and Communications, said: "Universities as knowledge leaders in our society have an important role to play in raising awareness and equipping staff and students with the necessary information to bring GBV perpetrators to book."



The first campaign event, which was held at MUT's Anniversary Lane on the main campus between 12h00 and 13h00, focused on filling the knowledge gap on GBV, reporting cases to the police, and identifying what kind of evidence would be required from the person reporting. The event, which was themed "You are not forgotten", saw Anniversary Lane transformed into a memorial lane with pictures of victims of GBV on either side of the walkway.

The second session, themed "In her shoes", required participants to wear women's shoes or bring a pair. This session, held on Thursday, 20 February, took place at the Natural Sciences Campus on account of bad weather conditions making it impossible to use Anniversary Lane. Facilitated by MUT Events Coordinator, Jade Mthiyane, the session created a platform for staff and students to discuss how GBV impacts their lives, while others opened up about their experience of surviving GBV. To get the audience talking, Mthiyane carefully detailed various incidences and invited a panel of speakers to comment on cases as a starting point for discussions. Students and staff were quick to seize the opportunity and talk about the issues they face.

"We wanted to create a space where staff and students felt comfortable to talk about these issues without fear of being judged. We are also cognizant of the fact that many of our students come from homes where discussions about abuse, and sexual abuse in particular, are not encouraged," said Mthiyane. "It was fulfilling to see how participants embraced the opportunity we have created and were participating fully. The fact that we had a diversity of panellists who have extensive experience in various sections of GBV made the discussions richer."

The third session was devoted to tackling GBV from the perspective of members of the LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex) community. For this session, members of the LGBTQI shared their struggles with an audience that filled up the Anniversary Lane on Thursday, 27 February.

Leticia Sishi, Miss Gay Durban, and a Durban University of Technology Public Relations student, emphasised the importance of having the correct knowledge about the LGBTQI community. Sishi also highlighted some of the aggressive actions directed at LGBTQI people: "You get killed for who and what you are. GBV has been with us for a long time. But it's getting worse." Sishi, a transgender woman, once had



MUT Clinic's Gebi Nkosi addressing students at the Faculty of Natural Sciences

- ◆ *"Universities as knowledge*
- ◆ *leaders in our society have an*
- ◆ *important role to play in raising awareness and equipping staff and students with the necessary information to bring GBV perpetrators to book."*

*Mbali Mkhize, Senior Director:  
Marketing and Communications*

a gun pointed at her because of her sexuality. Sishi explained that members of the LGBTQI community do not owe anyone an explanation. "All you need from other people is respect," she said.

After all this internal campaigning, it was now time to take the "Black Thursday against GBV" campaign outside MUT to the streets of Umlazi Township. This was done through a silent protest on Thursday, 5 March. MUT students in all-black attire and tape over their mouths, in solidarity with the eight out of nine victims of abuse who are unable to report their cases, took the campaign to the traffic lights in Umlazi's V Section and Megacity. The campaign capitalised on the lunch hour traffic, raising awareness among passing motorists.

"The war against GBV is far from over. The statistics on reported cases are scary," said Mkhize. "The University will continue to raise awareness and do its part in fighting the scourge."



## MUT supports family of slain student

A dark cloud fell on MUT on 1 May 2018, the day the University received the news that one of its students, Zolile Khumalo, had been killed. Zolile, then a first-year Quantity Surveying student, had been shot at Lonsdale Hotel, an off-campus student residence, by her ex-boyfriend Thabani Mzolo. In the last few years a number of South African university students have been killed by people they knew, and Zolile's death brought home the horror of gender-based violence.

The Department of Marketing and Communications was one of the departments that acted as soon as they got the shocking news. In addition to disseminating key information, they decided to find out more about the student and her family. They knew that the incident would grow into a big story, and that it would include more hardship for the family in Eshowe, in northern KwaZulu-Natal. This assumption proved very true for Solomuzi Khumalo and his wife Princess. Zolile was the fifth child they had lost, leaving them with only one child, Senamile, who lives in Ngonyameni on the west of Umlazi Township.

Solomuzi, a pensioner, said life was hard for the family. "We are struggling financially. We have to look after our grandchildren," he said. The family had pinned their hopes on Zolile to look after them after graduating and securing a job. Solomuzi and Princess were badly affected by Zolile's passing. Senamile said her father cries a lot, and one day told her "not to be in a relationship with a man who did not go to church. He is always aware that some men do not accept that the relationship has ended, and resort to violence," said Senamile.

Solomuzi and Princess said they were coping with the situation because of their religion. "This is what gives us strength. Other church members in our area pray for us, and with us on Wednesday when we meet at different houses," said Solomuzi.

On the afternoon of 5 March 2020, the last day of Thabani Mzolo's trial, they called the church members and informed them that Thabani had been sentenced to life imprisonment. Zolile's parents were very happy with this verdict. Solomuzi and Princess had sat on the



*Dr Malaza giving the media MUT's response to the outcome of the trial*



*The Khumalo family outside Durban High Court: from left, Senamile, Zolile's sister, Mr Khumalo, Mrs Khumalo, and Zolile's aunt, Mrs Khethiwe Ngema*

hard, unforgiving court benches for a week, listening to the recounting of the events that unfolded on 1 May 2018 and in the days that followed. Senamile said her parents were wrecked by the court visit; it brought back all the sad times they had been through.

Being aware of how tough it would be for the Khumalo family to be in court, MUT made arrangements to soften the blow. On the first day of that week, the University arranged a gender-based violence protest walk from the Lonsdale Hotel, where Zolile was murdered. "Although we did not know how long the trial was going to last, we decided to continue supporting the family as we were aware of how hard it has been for them. On the first day of the trial we drove them home, and fetched them the following morning. We arranged a place for them to stay as the distance from Durban to Eshowe is more than 140km. Imagine having to drive that distance twice a day," said Mbali Mkhize, Senior Director: Marketing and Communications. Mbali's department drove the family home on the last day of the trial too, a gesture greatly appreciated by the Khumalos. Solomuzi and Princess were also very happy to meet the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Dr Enoch Duma Malaza.

## MUT students march to demand justice for Zolile and raise GBV awareness

It was 06h00 on Monday, 2 March outside the Lonsdale Residence in Durban's South Beach and members of the eThekweni Metro Police had already started cordoning off a section of the road where it would all begin. This was the starting point for a march to the Durban High Court to demand justice for the murder of slain MUT student, Zolile Khumalo.

The Lonsdale Residence was carefully chosen as the starting point for the march to symbolise taking Zolile's spirit from where she was murdered to the court where her murderer, Thabani Mzolo, was going to appear. Monday also marked an important day in the trial: Judge Nompumelelo Radebe was going to start delivering judgement on the case, which has been in court for two years.

"Our students were part of this trial from the beginning when Zolile's murderer appeared in court for the first time," said Mbali Mkhize, Senior Director: Marketing and Communications. "The march was an opportunity to reaffirm the University's stance against GBV and to make it clear that MUT will not tolerate GBV or any acts of abuse."

Although it was business as usual on campus, with lectures continuing as scheduled, the march was too important for some students to miss. It was an opportunity to raise awareness about the scourge of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the busy streets of Durban's city centre and to demand justice for a fellow student who was now part of the statistics of those who had lost their lives to GBV.

Students started trickling in as small numbers were being dropped off by buses organised to bring students to the march. Each of these students walked into Lonsdale Residence first to pick up their black T-shirts in line with the all-black dress code which has become a uniform for any activity against GBV at MUT. A voice on the loud hailer called on all students to get into their positions as the march was beginning. Meanwhile, the marshals in their reflector jackets



*MUT students giving support to the Khumalo family, and saying NO to GBV*

formed a line that would be the barrier between the marching students and the cars using the other side of the road.

The police led the march with vehicles and motorbikes, the crowd following behind them with song and dance. When the march got to the middle of Anton Lembede Street (Smith Street), a rhythm was now developed which was the highlight of the march. It was song, dance, singing while sitting down in the middle of the road and humming. The busy street came to a halt with spectators from buildings on both sides of the road coming out in their numbers to watch. The message on the placards said it all: There is no place for gender-based violence at MUT.

At the end of the march, across the road from the Durban High Court, students demanded to get into the court to watch as judgement was handed down. The students could not enter the court because it was full, so they waited across the road from the court and met the Khumalo family to show their support, as they have done throughout the trial.

Their patience and dedication were rewarded when they were back outside the Durban High Court again on Thursday, 5 March, when Mzolo was sentenced to life in prison for taking Zolile's life. As they exited the court after the sentencing, the Khumalo family was greeted by a group of MUT students who were singing outside the court, celebrating the sentence which was a long-awaited positive step in the struggle.



# International students' orientation



*Dr Enoch Duma Malaza, middle, shaking hands with a student from the DRC, Esther. Others are Dr Thobile Poswa, HOD, Environmental Health, left, and Dr Papy Numbi, third from right (obscured), and other students*

There are no limits when it comes to education. This is what we learned when we saw the number of international students we have at MUT this year, during the MUT International Student Orientation on 20 February 2020. The event, hosted by the Marketing and Communications department, advanced the Vice-Chancellor's "Anchor Strategy" as it was not only held on campus, but there were tours around Umlazi sections.

One of the stops was Ogwini High School where the principal, Dr Vusi Dlamini, gave MUT international students a presentation and a tour around his historic school which continues to produce high marks regardless of the high number of learners it accommodates. "You will never find any other local university trying to lift the quality of neighbouring schools like MUT does; they have made sure their relationship with Umlazi schools is treated like a conveyor belt," Dr Dlamini said. "I'm hoping that the international students that MUT brought today will come and tutor our learners on weekends."

A cherry on the top of International Student Orientation



*International students with Principal of Ogwini Comprehensive High Schools, Dr Vusumuzi Dlamini*

was a tour around the Durban CBD and other eye-catching places they could visit when not swamped with school work. The purpose of the event was to make our international students feel at home away from home, and also to show them that they have our full support should they have any problems. The event was graced by the presence of MUT international lecturers and Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Enoch Duma Malaza, who assured international students that they are safe at MUT and all of their challenges will be attended.



## International academics make a telling mark in MUT's academic progression

The University that started off from very humble beginnings – 15 students in 1979, all males – has since produced more than 40 000 graduates. Although Mangosuthu University of Technology was a Technicon when it was founded by Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi 40 years ago, it soon took on international flavour when it was joined by academics from outside South Africa. David Atta from Ghana was one of the first international academics to be part of the set-up. David spent most of his adult life at the institution, working in the Department of Chemical Engineering. He and others were to be joined by many other internationals in time.

Their role has been immense, and some of them have won awards. What is most pleasing about them is that they are very forward-looking individuals, and some are found in labs, studying or teaching, even during the weekends. Most joined the University either with a Master's degree, or were working towards one. Most have gone on to obtain PhDs (doctorates) from local universities. The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) is one of the local institutions where most of these internationals graduate.

### Meet some of the 35 international academics that are currently employed by the University:



*Joseph Kapuku Bwapwa, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has a PhD from UKZN.*



*Professor Babatunde Femi Bakare, from the Republic of Nigeria, has a PhD from UKZN.*



*Hloniphani Ndebele, from Zimbabwe, has a PhD from UKZN.*



*Bethel Mutanga, from Zimbabwe, has a PhD from the University of Zululand.*



*Michael Mwitwa Shapi, from Zambia, has a PhD from the University of Helsinki, Finland.*



*Chiemela Onunka, middle, from the Republic of Nigeria, has a PhD from UKZN*



*Farai Murungu, from Zimbabwe, has a PhD from the University of Fort Hare.*



*Professor Georgina Arthur, from Ghana, has a PhD from UKZN*

- ◆ Chrispin Mulangu, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has a PhD from UKZN.
- ◆ Pappy Numbi, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has a PhD from the University of Pretoria.

# Alumni in action

## Convocation Executive visits Founder and former Premier to seek help



*Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, fourth from left, with the MUT Convocation Executive, and MUT staff in front of the Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi Museum and Documentation Centre*

This important trip was initiated by the University's new Convocation Executive, which was elected on 7 December 2019. Its president, Sandile Dlamini, said that as part of Convocation's plan for contributing to the improvement of conditions at the University, they would contact strategic partners and request them to help out. The Prince of KwaPhindangene, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, was naturally their first choice. This decision was supported by the Vice-Chancellor and the University Registrar who are also by virtue of their positions, members of Convocation Executive.

"We wanted to hit the ground running," Sandile said. As former student leaders, Sandile and his team understood the urgency of the situation. Their standpoint was that it did not make too much sense that every year the same problems occur at South African universities, and nothing is done about them. Who does not know there will be problems related to housing next year? We are all expecting that the lack of post-graduate funding will be one of the issues the students will put on the table next year. There will be

huge numbers of applicants that will be turned away because of a lack of space. There are many other issues that Sandile and his team are aware of. But the said ones require urgent attention, and universities need outside partners to help deal with them.

The Convocation Executive is acutely aware of this fact, and their plan has been commended in very high places and supported by the University's executive leadership. This is a giant step for the Convocation



Executive which is relatively young; yet this youthfulness has been hailed somewhere else as a huge advantage.

After 11am all the delegation members, except the driver bringing the big token for the founder, were parking the vehicles at the MUT founder's offices where the meeting was to be held.

A seasoned reporter, Knowledge Simelane, was already there. As soon as the formal greetings were over, everybody filed in. The delegation was ushered into a huge hall, and was told the Prince would be joining them soon. After they had taken their positions, with the Convocation's Executive President taking a seat nearest to the one reserved for HRH, the Prince appeared from an inside door. The broad smile he offered gave assurance to all: "You are all welcomed!" This was followed by the formal greetings, with the Prince clearly recognising old friends, and acknowledging the presence of new ones.

The Prince then invited the Convocation President to state the reasons for the visit. Sandile informed HRH of Convocation's desire to assist the University to deal with a number of challenges, some of which are its huge student debt, the unavailability of funding for post-graduate students, inadequate resources, and need to acquire some land for expansion. The Convocation leadership requested the Prince to communicate with his networks, and see if they could assist in improving the situation at the University.

Prince Buthelezi said the visit was "historic, and impressive. I am humbled by your message, Mr Dlamini". Prince Buthelezi, who built 6 000 schools in KwaZulu-Natal, is a brilliant story teller and gave a long, clear history of the events that resulted in the founding of MUT. His point was that he has always been aware of the plight of the black people, and that education was going to provide a real improvement in their lives. Even before the meeting was over, he tried calling someone he thought could help. He relished the opportunity of once again helping MUT so it could continue to produce more graduates.

As a sign of great respect, and a clear indication that they would like the relationship with the Prince to continue, the delegation presented a cow to Prince Buthelezi, as well as a framed collage of pictures of the



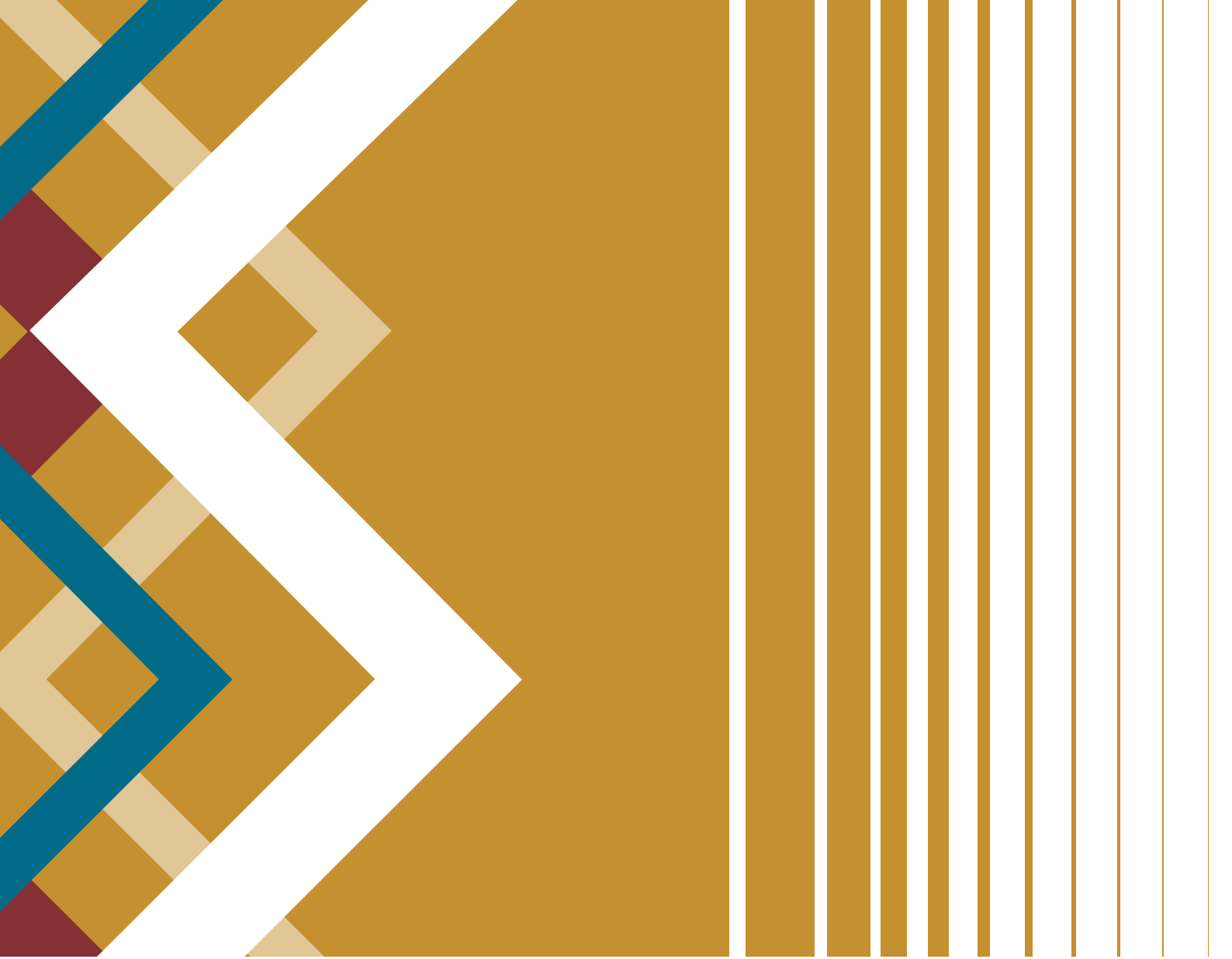
*Former KwaZulu-Natal Premier, Mr Willies Mchunu, middle, shaking hands with Sandile Dlamini while other members of the Convocation look on. Mr Mchunu is a former Chancellor of MUT*

students that have graduated at MUT over the last few years. The Prince was more than elated. He spent time looking at the frame, which is a reflection of his desire to improve the lives of people through education. He also appreciated the cow gift very much, and said he might return the favour, in one way or the other.

The following day, the Convocation leadership visited Mr Willies Mchunu, the former Premier of KwaZulu-Natal. They had the same request for the former Premier, who is also the former Chancellor of the University. This time they emphasised the necessity of dealing urgently with the historic debt. Mr Mchunu was also more than happy to welcome the Convocation leadership. He commended them for the new tactics they were employing in dealing with the problematic issues that have bedevilled South African universities. "I really commend you young people for employing different tactics in dealing with the challenges. Although I am officially retired from government, I am still an active cadre of the ANC, and the general community. On that basis, I am going to consider your request for me to help," said the former Premier. Like Prince Buthelezi, the former Premier tried connecting them with an individual whom he described as someone that would take the lead in facilitating what was going to happen regarding the Convocation leadership's request.

The Convocation Executive leadership is waiting with bated breath for the outcome of the visits. In the meantime, they are continuing with their visits to strategic partners. The former Premier was more than impressed with the line-up of the people they intended to meet.





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