

**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.