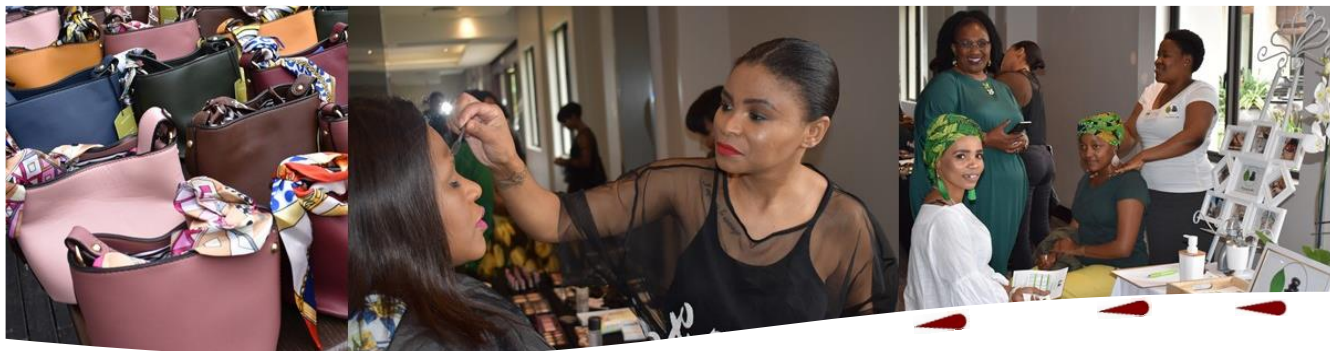




Celebrating Women’s Day with an intention to become better people at home and in the workplace



“Thank you to the MUT Vice-Chancellor and Executive Management Committee (EMC) for giving us this day as the women of MUT to listen to the women who understand the traps we find ourselves in. These women reminded us that we are not alone and that there are ways to come out of these traps, better and more enlightened”, echoed women after women through emails and face-to-face conversations with organisers after the MUT Imbokodo Experience.

The dawn of democracy in 1994 brought an acknowledgment of issues such as gender parity; gender-based-violence; women being under-represented in management positions and in STEM; small number of women registered in universities; the list is endless. So, with Women’s month; the opportunities to celebrate women’s successes arose. Women across the country have begun to rise to higher echelons, and the country and its politicians celebrated those many women success stories. The women (high-end/top-notch) began to be celebrated and paraded before the rest of society as the ‘*It* women’; but those are still a small fraction of what society represents.

Noting the gains of women over the past few decades and future women’s gains, MUT has decided to take a firm stand that if women are to further make any successes; there needs to be a shift in how it celebrates its Women’s Day. This year the focus was on how the women of MUT could balance work and family life, thus rising above the day-to-day challenges they face in their personal and professional lives.

MUT’s Women’s Day theme centred on #TalentKnowsNoBarriers and thus repurposed talent in everyday challenges that women face. The speakers were chosen to reassure women that talent is broad.



MUT Imbokodo Experience 2019



The talent of letting go

Can women manage their work-life balance if they cannot let go? Not letting go is an emotional attachment and this failure to let go could challenge an individual and render her dysfunctional in the workplace because she is holding on to something, actually something that is no longer there. Motivational speaker, Fikile Magubane, spoke about how one evening she went to extinguish emotional fires at a relative's place only to get to her house to discover her own 15-year-old son, who was an A student at Kearsney College in Hillcrest, had taken his life. The family will never know the cause.

Would that not have left her filled with resentment all her life? Yes, it did for months on end but when she realised that all those around her were affected, she embarked on a self-healing process. That re-awakening confirmed to her that there are many women who suffer various life pains. Her journey has now been to talk to people on radio, newspapers, and at different platforms about allowing themselves to have this power of letting go.

It is not an easy journey and will need the University to pay special attention to those women that still suffer every morning as they come to work because letting go is a talent and needs not only a strong family support structure but also an organisation's intervention.

Assuring EMC after this debriefing, Dr Encoh Duma Malaza urged the HR&D department to look into the wellbeing of staff and restart the process of getting a Wellness Officer.



The talent of financial acumen



Both spoke about the need for women to start understanding the time value of money and to start looking at bigger things that women must start focusing on to make their money grow. Of course money does not grow on trees, it grows on sound investment. “The time has come for women to be money-savvy. Start looking at where you are investing your money and be realistic. Are you building a house where you will have your title deed or are you building because someone recommended or sold you a site where you don’t have a title deed? What are the dangers? Is someone not going to gun after you as a woman and tell you the site belonged to their forefathers? Then, is this not the time for women to be guided by laws and policies on how well your money is invested? These are long awaited discussions and speak to the very core of womanhood. Women are kind and compassionate and in the process could find themselves being swindled out of all their savings resulting in poor work performance.

‘Are you one of those women who can’t say no to family and extended family demands and play God when they need financial help that will unsettle your financial planning? Or are you one of those women who can’t say no to endless shopping sprees – be it pots, cutlery and crockery, Tupperware, dresses, shoes, bags, and what have you?’

Speakers, Thandeka Ellenson, acting CEO at Moses Kotane Institute and Noluthando Magewu, General Manager at Ethekewini Municipality, urged MUT women to understand financial acumen as a talent.



The talent of humanity



Arthie Moore is a professional speaker and co-founder of KI International. She can greet in more than 80 languages and speaks fluent Zulu despite being brought up within an Indian household. This power of understanding different languages has helped her break barriers but for MUT we wanted her to talk about how ‘The rise of women is not about the fall of men’.

Yes, women are getting into higher positions! Yes, women, regardless of jobs are beginning to earn higher salaries than men! South Africa is one of the countries that is appreciative of the fact that such disparities are slowly fading away. Arthie still believes that at home, our culture and traditions still instil those elements of humanity. Hence, she greets with all the clan names - she uses the Ngcobo one - ‘Fuze fulela, mashiya mahle angathi azoshumayela...’ Over and above, Arthie reminded women that regardless of whether you are seen as having equity there are words that must be inseparable from our being: ‘Thank you’, ‘Please’ May I’. With these words intrinsic in our dialogue, we can identify ourselves as women that still respect our cultures and traditions and thus become more collegial and happier both at home and in the workplace.



Championing research at MUT for close to two decades

Arriving in the winter of 2000 as the first research director at MUT has not deterred Dr Anette Mienie. Today, she has seen a number of women attaining their Masters and PhDs and the support that her office provides has been appreciated. As MUT celebrates its women, let us look back and appreciate the Anettes of MUT and many other women that are changing our professional ways.



Under the sterling leadership of Dr Mienie, in an effort to take the University to a higher level, the Research Directorate convened a Research Indaba on 26-27 August 2019 at Durban International Convention Centre wherein all matters that had to do with research were discussed. The Research Indaba gave the University's staff a chance to air their views, and contribute upon future plans for research at the University. Some sticking points in the discussion were the workload carried by academics, and how that affected the academics' research.

There was a strong feeling that there needed to have been some adjustments to this so that academics could have time to research. Professor Logan Naidoo, a well-established researcher from the Department of Human Resources and Management, pointed out that there were cases where the workload of some academics was reduced, but still they did not engage in any research. They continued to do teaching as usual.

For Professor Naidoo, that was not enough, teaching and learning should be research-informed so that the outcomes could improve. Research should be done out of necessity, and it should come from within, he said. Staff should be willing to do research, and also look for assistance, Professor Naidoo advised.



Championing research at MUT for close to two decades

Among the critical areas that attracted the spotlight were how young and new researchers could be assisted to gain a foothold in research, and if it was viable to encourage non-established researchers to publish their work in non-recognised journals. The University's senior researchers highlighted the need for everyone to do research. Professor Naidoo pointed to the side effects of putting emphasis on publishing on recognised publications.



He said that could have a negative effect upon the new researchers. "Let's give new researchers a chance to start small, and grow," said Professor Naidoo. He, and Professor Roger Cooposamy, another well-published researcher and multiple awards winner from the Department of Nature Conservation, suggested that the experienced researchers mentor new researchers. However, there was a different view from Dr Papi Numbi, who said that it was imperative for MUT researchers to stick to the SAPSE and government-recognised journals for their research papers.

Finding your call at MUT during transition

Literature on new CEOs is in general a bit scary. Some people view new CEOs as a bit unsettling of the current status quo; bringing the new paradigm shift where they should not and pushing the limits too far. Those with high adrenalin, love that approach. Others take time to move into that gear. As Dr Enoch Duma Malaza commences his second year in office, pay attention to what he said right at the outset and see if that still applies. His catch-phrase when he came was "Don't bring problems - but provide solutions".

The Solutionist Approach is a huge thing in the corporate world of the 21st century. At MUT, this approach has made people take it a step further. Work teams have been working on various new methodologies. Take the Strategic Plan 2025 for example. Instead of faculties or support units tackling that alone, the new approach has been about how strategic goals could be brought to life through collaboration. A huge wealth of ideas is emerging as each department/unit starts reflecting on how best the collaboration should happen. A spirit of teamwork is emerging. A spirit of respect of what the other is doing is emerging. And all these can be traced to the language that Dr Malaza was echoing on his first day: "I would like to partner with staff, the faculty and business units for the greater good of MUT". This also relates to the Leadership Expectations as outlined in MUT Strategy 2025:

Finding your call at MUT during transition

DELIVER

To deliver on our obligations to one another, our students and stakeholders while maintaining high standards and ethical behaviour.

ENGAGE

To engage and collaborate with one another, our students and all stakeholders.

EMPOWER

To 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

To discover and share new knowledge and new ways to lead through teaching, intellectual engagement and use of technology.

SUSTAIN

To sustain our local and global environment, organisational health and ability to create a viable future.



To say the University has embraced MUT Strategy 2025 is an understatement. MUT Strategy 2025 has now become an advent. It is an arrival of something big or something that is about to happen to MUT and to change not only how the University has been doing things but to do things better and of course with measurement. The University is ready for MUT 2025.

Forget about difficulties, find solutions – Professor Mamokgethi Setati Phakeng

Women's Day at UCT has shifted to another level. It has been hosted at various provinces and KZN was also one where UCT came to the alumni and friends of UCT to celebrate and share the Vice-Chancellor's vision on 29 August 2019 at the Cotsworld Downs, Hillcrest.

UCT Vice-Chancellor, Prof Mamokgethi Phakeng aka @Fabacademic as she is affectionately known on Twitter and Instagram, the social media platforms where she engages with everyone who follows her or who she follows, looked even smaller and younger than in all these platforms – something she also laughed about.

“Our core business of the university is run by an all women team; one from Argentina and two from SA's two racial groups (White and Coloured). As women in executive we have to come together and support one another at a broader level and find ways of cascading this down.

We felt that if one woman fails in her position that gives all women a bad name. We want to make sure that the world has confidence in the ability of women to run universities. To ensure that women are empowered to excel we have conceptualised the #UCTForWomxnByWomxn focusing on investing in areas of study focusing in women issues and challenging gender stereotypes,” she said.



Focusing on our strategy; “I had to think about Transformation, Excellence, Sustainability. I then realised that to make an impact as Vice-Chancellor, I needed to run programmes targeting designated groups to ensure that they do not compete with established researchers but develop capacity for women not only at UCT but across South Africa and Africa.” This programme is funded through altruism of South Africans and overseas donors. Some of the women who attended are at the beginning of their research across South Africa and UCT is paying attention to them.