



Mangosuthu
University of Technology

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SPIRIT

A MANGOSUTHU UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY NEWSLETTER



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- Inspiring the MUT Research Agenda - leading by example
- Servant leader inspires his mentor to greatness
- MUT students optimise opportunities at the MUT R&I Week

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FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, MBALI MKHIZE

ASPIRE TO INSPIRE



Mbali Mkhize

"To aspire is to rise up to a great plan, an abundant hope of fulfilling a worthwhile mission. To inspire is to convey a feeling of joining a higher cause, influencing soulful action. Simply defined, aspire is an individual effort while inspire brings others into the mix."

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Many of my colleagues ask themselves why they wake up and leave the comfort of their homes to work at MUT. For many of us it is the love of our jobs. Way back, one diligent lecturer once said: "At the end of it all, it is watching the graduands walk on the stage, much to the delight of their families that I am still standing as a lecturer." How true for many of us!

At MUT there is a strong sense of inspiration and a desire to make a difference in the lives of the students we serve. This issue of the MUT Spirit contains numerous examples of how the MUT community is living the concept of "aspiring to inspire".

To borrow a popular expression from our Acting Vice-Chancellor, Prof Marcus Ramogale: "Let not your background determine your future." To illustrate this, we have a tale of two professors, Zodwa Dlamini and Nokwethemba Ndlazi, who both came from rural areas and aspired to become much better individuals. Both were inspired by people who opened the doors of higher education for them

despite their background. And they never looked back.

Carrying on that tradition, Prof Dlamini has since brought numerous collaborators into the MUT fold. These are partners MUT would never have expected to be associated with, and they have all rallied behind Prof Dlamini's inspiring aspirations for MUT. During the Research and Innovation Week, for instance, Prof Dlamini had two government ministers marvelling at the pockets of research activity which are happening at MUT despite our financial and resource challenges.

I have said many times that a brand is created, protected and elevated by its biggest asset - its stakeholders. It is not to be taken lightly that next year - at a time when the world is at a crossroads in terms of climate change - MUT will start offering a Master of Nature Conservation degree. It is the aspiration of Prof Peter Small and his team in the Faculty of Natural Sciences to make South Africa a better place that will enable MUT (in spite of its township location and relatively meagre resources) to be an inspiration to the world by producing something as meaningful as this qualification.

Our publication speaks to various aspects of "aspiring to inspire". I hope you too are inspired as you turn its pages.

INSPIRING FEEDBACK FROM THE COUNCIL ON HIGHER EDUCATION

On 17 May 2016, a panel from the Council on Higher Education (CHE) visited the senior management of MUT and the four task teams involved in the Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) for an institutional discussion.

This visit took place for an audit and is predated to 27 May 2014 when MUT launched the QEP under the leadership of Prof Marcus Ramogale.

According to the CHE information document on the QEP: "Quality enhancement is about improving. There are no boxes to tick off. Enhancement is an ongoing process. It is a journey. But there are milestones and measures of success on the journey. The QEP has been designed to encourage institutions to reflect on what they do and why... to promote collective impact across the higher education sector by encouraging sharing among institutions of what they find to be effective in promoting student success, working together on common problems and building capacity in areas key to student success."

Thus it was that on this visit, all the MUT teams had to reflect, in the presence of the CHE panel, on the journey travelled during this project and the gains made through it. The visit was a huge success and showed that over the past two years MUT has attained much in terms of: 1) enhancing teachers as academics; 2) enhancing student support and development; 3) enhancing the learning environment; and 4) enhancing course and programme enrolment management.

After the visit, Acting Vice-Chancellor Prof Ramogale received an encouraging note from Prof Dianne Gray, Director of Institutional Audits at the CHE. It read: "Thank you very much for enabling us to do an institutional visit to MUT on 17 May



CHE's Prof Diane Grayson, third from left, with Prof Ramogale, second from left, and other MUT officials

as part of the QEP. The day was very well-organised, and we appreciate the way in which you and your colleagues welcomed us, as well as the hospitality. As we said on the day, we were very impressed with the high level of commitment to students and to the institution, and the very positive and cohesive institutional culture that we saw."

The sentiment was well received by the University community which had been heavily involved in the QEP. Some of the things that stood out during the discussion were the CHE panel's praise of MUT's openness to change and its institutional transformation and general progress over the past few years. MUT was commended on the collegiality and collaboration, passion and care for students that shone through in the conversations with the task teams.

The panel highlighted the consultative and inclusive manner in which most of the work is done at MUT. Examples of this are the development of the workload model, the conceptualisation and rolling out of on-line registration, and the approach to student leadership development, focusing on social cohesion and accountability. The panel urged MUT to share these experiences with the higher education sector.

Summing up the entire QEP journey, Director of the Quality Management Directorate at MUT, Dr Aria Merkestein, said: "Much has happened in these past two years; four broad interdisciplinary task teams were formed, workshops and task team meetings were conducted, introspection was done, discussions took place, plans were made, and reports were compiled and submitted to the CHE. But amidst the busy-ness of workshops and meetings and reports, the focus was on how we, as members of the MUT community, enhance what we are doing to achieve student success now and in the future; and, in order to achieve this, how we make sure that we enhance student learning and so increase the number of graduates who have attributes that are personally, professionally and socially valuable."

Dr Merkestein added that it was a good visit with meaningful exchanges towards creating an even better future for MUT and its students, and for the higher education sector. She said that there was work to be done, as always. The CHE visit confirmed that MUT was on the right track towards student success and the University has been heartened and energised to continue this journey.

INSPIRING THE MUT RESEARCH AGENDA - LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Prof Zodwa Dlamini, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagements (RIE) recently convened MUT's very first Research and Innovation Week. Given the University's limited financial resources, the idea seemed far-fetched back in November 2015, but with characteristic optimism, Prof Dlamini said: "Plan this as a big event. There will be funding, stakeholder cooperation and collaboration."

Inspired by Prof Dlamini's confidence, the RIE team rose to the challenge. The result was an astounding Research and Innovation Week, held from 6-10 June 2016 and attended by 650 delegates from government, business, South African Research Councils and universities, both local and overseas, and Ms Naledi Pandor MP, Minister of Science and Technology, and Mr Nathi Mthethwa MP, Minister of Arts and Culture.

The inspiring event was funded by government entities and, rather than 'talking shop', it focused on "inculcating a culture of research among MUT researchers and academia in general to court partners for our ongoing efforts in the areas of innovation and research collaborations and community development," said Prof Dlamini.

The role of collaborators such as the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) and the National Research Fund (NRF) cannot be overemphasised in making the Research and Innovation Week the success that it was, with many high-profile delegates and speakers in attendance.

One of the highlights of the week was the inaugural lecture series launched by Prof Dlamini during the gala evening. Speaking on: "Unlocking the genetics of cancer", Prof Dlamini kicked off her presentation with a brief introduction to cancer biology in which she explained that in this 'disease of the genes', "the genetic make-up, and the need for

precision/personalised medicine and targeted therapy are important". Cancer research is close to Prof Dlamini's heart. In her words: "Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for 7.6 million deaths annually, with lung, stomach, liver, colon and breast cancer causing the most deaths. Thirty per cent of cancer deaths are due to behavioural and dietary risks such as a high body mass index, low fruit and vegetable intake, lack of physical activity, tobacco use and alcohol use." Of these risk factors, tobacco use is the most important, accounting for 71% of cancer deaths such as viral infections; HBV/HCV



Prof Dlamini with Prof Dave Bates of the University of Nottingham, UK

and HPV cause 20% of cancer deaths, while indoor smoke (such as from household use of solid fuels), as well as urban air pollution, can also cause cancer. Seventy per cent of all cancer deaths are in low and middle income countries and deaths worldwide are projected to continue rising.

Prof Dlamini's research centres on oesophageal cancer which she said is "the most common carcinoma in black South African men. My study demonstrated statistically significant differences in the number of cases of oesophageal cancer among patients who smoked or drank beer versus those who did not. Patients who

drank beer fermented from infected maize were more likely to have oesophageal cancer than those that do not drink beer.

In the course of her research on Apoptosis and Cancer as a postdoctoral fellow, lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor, and professor of molecular genetics, Prof Dlamini has supervised and mentored more than 10 Master's and doctoral students. These students have been absorbed mostly by the pharmaceutical industry and generated a number of publications, mostly in this niche area, thus contributing to capacity development and enlarging the body of knowledge on the subject.

"As a professor of molecular genetics, I publish my research in international journals and endeavour to partner with various top researchers from across the globe. As I pursue my research agenda, I simultaneously look for opportunities that will open doors for MUT researchers and for students where possible," said Prof Dlamini. Last March, Prof Dlamini forewent her research income to enable at least five students to register at MUT; Prof Dlamini intends to give these students vacation jobs in the laboratories she works in so they may draw a 'small income'.

PROF DLAMINI'S CURRENT COLLABORATIONS

- University of Nottingham, Queens Medical Centre, UK
- Shanghai Jiaotong University, China
- University of Hawaii, USA
- University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
- Universität Vreie Berlin, Berlin, Germany
- Regina Elena Cancer Institute, Oncogenomics Laboratory, Rome
- Ludwig Boltzman Institute for Cancer Research, Vienna, Austria
- Louisiana State University Health Sciences Centre, New Orleans, USA

ASPIRE TO INSPIRE

- AN EXTRACT FROM THE ACTING VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF MARCUS RAMOGALE'S SPEECH TO GRADUANDS DURING GRADUATION



Prof Ramogale, second from right, doing the 'last dance' with Chancellor Sisulu, Madonsela and graduates

FOURTEEN tips on joining the University of Life:

1. Know that an entitlement mentality will not help you; no one owes you a job, house, money, happiness or anything. If you want to have all these, you will have to work hard for them because you owe them to yourself.
2. Know that the pampered life you enjoyed as a student has come to an end. As a student, you live a charmed, sheltered life. In real life, however, you will find that there is no one to make demands on. In fact, in real life the University of Hard Knocks will make demands on you, and you will be expected to respond.

3. Know that super-achievers create their own path of success because they see the world as largely made-up. When super-achievers look at the world, they see malleability and flexibility. They do not see the world as fixed and unchangeable.
4. Never be afraid to use the skills you have acquired to start your own business.
5. Know that happy people are those who do what they love. So find your passion and pursue it with joy.
6. Be choosy regarding the environment in which you live and work. Always select an environment inhabited by quality people because quality

people support one another, build valuable networks and create a steady stream of new opportunities.

7. The daily effort you put into your work will invariably lead you to situations where you find opportunities for success.
8. Know that in the Information Age, where the chatter in cyberspace can be deafening, there are many nasty viruses of the mind – mind pollutants that keep you dumb and broke. So learn to screen what you allow into your mind, knowing that wrong input leads to wrong results; right input, right results.
9. Never stop learning because you think you have arrived. As the Book of Proverbs reminds us: "A wise person increases in learning, but a fool despises knowledge and instruction."
10. Know that there are two ways to be rich. One way is to have a lot of money, the other is to have few wants. The more you control your desires and learn to be happy with what you already have, the less you will spend. The less you spend, the less you will need to earn, and the less you earn, the greater the freedom you will have.

11. Remember that the best things in life are free.
12. Dare to dream but also dare to act if you hope to see your dreams become reality.
13. Develop a collaborative mindset; be a team player because "no

man is an island entire of itself". Know that you will always need the support and assistance of others in the achievement of your goals.

14. Know that life is hard and is not always fair. Good things will happen to you as you journey through life, but so will the hurtful.

Life has always been this way and will always be this way. Try to be good. Live ethically, but know that bad things also happen to good people. As the Bible says, the sun rises upon evil men as well as the good ones, and it rains upon the honest and dishonest.

When life seems unfair, when it has taken away from you all that you treasure, remember that it does not help to complain because complaining makes problems worse. Remember that pain in life is inevitable, but that misery is optional. What this means, dear graduands, is that even in the midst of suffering you still have the ability to choose your own attitude. You can choose to be crushed by life's challenges, or you can choose to be strengthened by what has hurt you. Attitude always remains the last human

freedom when all other freedoms have been taken from you. Life may be hard and at times unfair, but that does not mean it has to be intolerable. Never forget to play and to laugh, because laughter remains the best medicine. Unlike the medicine you buy from a pharmacy, laughter is for free and it is natural. As scientific research has shown, laughter is a great healer and a strong painkiller. So learn to laugh and never take yourself too seriously

because we survive by finding amusement in life.

When terrible things happen to you do not despair, for you are not alone. Remember that as an individual you are the self-expression of the 'Infinite Power' that governs the universe and that you are forever one with it and cannot be separated. So learn to turn to this 'Infinite Power' in moments of trouble, whether you call this Power God, Allah or Natural Order.

ASPIRING TO INSPIRE STUDENT SUCCESS

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF GRADUATE ACHIEVEMENTS AT MUT WAS PROVIDED BY PROF MARCUS RAMOGALE, ACTING VICE-CHANCELLOR, DURING GRADUATION

The University has gone all out to increase its student throughput. Here is a brief overview of notable graduate achievements:

- There was a 3% increase in the number of graduates compared to 2015;
- The overall number of qualifications conferred this year was 28;
- The Electrical Engineering programme graduated the most number of students - 256 in total,

and the Department of Accounting graduated the most students in all its programmes, more than 400;

- The Postgraduate Diploma in Nature Conservation was conferred for the first time to eight students. This is the first postgraduate qualification at MUT and the first of its kind in South Africa, meaning that in this country, whoever wants to enrol for a Postgraduate Diploma in Nature Conservation must come to MUT;

- The highest number of graduates was in the Faculty of Management Sciences (1104) but the largest increase since 2015 was in the Faculty of Natural Sciences, which saw a 14.5% increase in the number of students graduating;
- The Department of Biomedical Science had the highest number of diploma graduates in the past six years, and 98% of its Bachelor of Technology students graduated.

GRADUATION

2016 GRADUATION "A RESOUNDING SUCCESS"

Graduation 2016 took place from 19-23 April 2016. It was an auspicious occasion for MUT, our students and their overjoyed families. What's more, this was also MUT's 30th diploma graduation since the first one on 16 October 1985. This year's record-breaking graduation was an affirmation that MUT is indeed on its way towards pre-eminence. From a single ceremony made up of only male graduates in 1985, graduation has expanded to five sessions hosting a total of 9 000 graduates and parents in 2016.



Nhlanhla Nene, left, with Prof Chandra Jinabhai, HOD, Accounting

As is now an established tradition, each faculty honours a great individual at the annual graduation. Nominees are submitted to a committee which then selects the deserving individual. The honorees to whom the 2016 graduation ceremonies were dedicated spoke on the realities of the working world, the need to be entrepreneurial in one's thinking and attitude, and the fruits of hard work.

These sentiments were affirmed by Prof Marcus Ramogale, who alerted the 2 487 graduating students to life beyond the classroom.

"You have been making demands upon us and your parents. We responded because it was our task," Prof Ramogale said. "Now your employers are going to make demands on you. The taxman is going to make demands on you. In fact the whole world will make demands on you. You will have to respond. Go and look for work, not jobs!"

Nhlanhla Nene, the former national Finance Minister, to whom the Accounting and Public Management graduation ceremony was dedicated, spoke on the importance of service to the country. He

told the students that it did not really matter if they were in private business or public business, as long as they were honestly contributing to the country's economy. Before addressing the students, Nene held a press conference on campus at which he stressed the importance of education and being disciplined in one's profession and life in general, no matter the circumstances. The message was taken up by the media and generated debates on broadcast platforms. The Dean of the Faculty of Management Sciences, Gona Govender, said that Nene had been chosen as an honoree because of his expertise in the field of commerce and his national contribution in this field. "In the past, the Faculty of Management Sciences graduation ceremonies have identified South African icons who could influence graduates through shared wisdom and as a consequence have the potential to be role models for these students; and 2016 is no different," Gona said.

The Human Resources and Management, Marketing and Office Technology ceremony was dedicated to **Philani Maphanga**. As a child, Maphanga was a herdboy at KwaNgcolosi, a rural village

in KwaZulu-Natal. Against the odds, he managed to become a Chartered Accountant and is now an Associate Director with professional services firm, PricewaterhouseCoopers. He has taken great strides to succeed in his field of work and is currently tasked



Philani Maphanga

with growing the firm's business in the higher education sector in KwaZulu-Natal. According to Gona: "The keynote addresses delivered by previous honorees normally uplift students and encourage them to succeed in their chosen post-university trajectories while reminding them of the

obligations they have towards their families, culture and the country as responsible South Africans." Maphanga spoke to graduands about the importance of volunteering in their immediate communities.

Professional natural scientist and agronomist, **Dr Felix Mkhize** was honoured by the Faculty of Natural Sciences. Dr Mkhize is the Head of Department of Agriculture in KwaZulu-Natal.



Dr Felix Mkhize, and his wife

Dr Mkhize is an experienced agricultural and development practitioner who has both South African and international experience. He has worked on all levels of agriculture (policy, planning, monitoring and implementation) and he has represented the South African agricultural sector on various forums locally and abroad. Bonginkosi Mthembu, Head of the Department of Community Extension, said they decided to honour Dr Mkhize for his expertise and immense contribution in the fields of agriculture, extension and development at various levels.

"Dr Mkhize will highlight the importance of the natural sciences, especially agriculture, and also make specific reference to its meaningful contribution to the social and economic challenges faced by the country, such as food security and climate change, in order for our students to be cognisant of the role played by agriculture in sustaining human life, maintaining a stable economy and contributing to the overall development of the country," said Mthembu.



Heita Engineers! Sipho Madonsela, giving an important message to his beloved engineering graduates

One other notable honoree was **Sipho Madonsela**, the Chief Executive Officer of the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA). Madonsela spoke of the importance of engineering in life and how it had changed people's lives over centuries. He said one of the reasons why China had progressed so much was because of the influence of government officials who had a strong engineering background. Madonsela was honoured because of his wealth of management experience in the engineering discipline, especially roads infrastructure, water applications and general industrial services.

INSPIRING FEMALE GRADUATE EXCELLENCE

A CONSAS AWARD FOR TWO YEARS IN A ROW



Nomcebo gets robbed by the deputy registrar at her graduation this year

Each year the Conference of Southern African Surveyors (CONSAS) offers an Award of Excellence to the best student in Surveying/Geomatics at every university offering a Surveying/Geomatics programme recognised by PLATO (South African Council for Professional and Technical Surveyors). This includes programmes in (Land) Surveying, Mine Surveying and Geo-informatic Sciences. The award is given to a student at each university who completed his/her undergraduate programme at the end of the previous year and obtained an average of at least 70% for all subjects in the programme.

The 2016 award at MUT went once again to a female Surveying graduate, Thembisile Nomcebo Masuku. Nomcebo obtained an average of 79% for her academic subjects and earned 18 distinctions out of her 24 subjects.

This is a great commendation for the lecturing staff who inspired such excellence in a male-dominated career path. "This is really an excellent performance which is acknowledged at national level by CONSAS," said Prof Landman, HOD of Surveying.

TEACHING AND LEARNING COLLOQUIUM

RELEVANT ASSESSMENT IN THE SPOTLIGHT AT MUT'S 4TH ANNUAL TEACHING & LEARNING COLLOQUIUM



Dr Manyane Makua gives an opening remark at the start of the colloquium

MUT's Teaching & Learning Development Centre (TLDC) hosted the 4th annual Teaching & Learning Colloquium in Durban from 5-6 May 2016. The colloquium drew delegates from MUT, CUT, UL, VUT, UNIZULU, the Academy for Facilities Management and the Christian Reformed Theological Seminary. The 2016 colloquium was the first to open its doors to external delegates, and colloquium discussion points were anchored in the truism expressed by TLDC Senior Director Dr Manyane Makua that "the principles are universal and the context is different."

Dr Makua set the stage for vibrant discussions around the challenges that the 21st century poses for higher education. "The questions higher education must answer relate to the quality of the students we produce and the extent to which they will be able to deal with the challenges posed not just by the professional environment...but by the 21st Century context itself," Dr Makua said. The colloquium addressed this issue in terms of how assessment matches

teaching in a world where graduate and employer satisfaction surveys point to an inconsistency between graduates' abilities and industry expectations.

Delivering the keynote address, Prof Mark Schofield, Professor of Learning and Teaching at Edge Hill University, England, spoke on the transformation shift that moves students from the 'left' as passive learners to the 'right' as active learners, and the resulting positive experience of learning that derives from such a shift. "The shift to the right leads to deeper learning, synthesis and comprehension," said Prof Schofield. Prof Schofield argued that for higher education to remain relevant in the 21st Century workplace, "our teaching has to move to active learning and create problem-based learning."

Graduates desired by employers, Prof Schofield maintains, must have the following skills: self-management, numeracy, communication skills, and commitment. "The type of teaching and

learning that happens at universities needs to develop these skills in graduates if they are to address the needs of the working world." For this to happen, a scaffolded approach should be used to take students from modelling to joint construction and finally to independence. "That makes for successful grounding," Prof Schofield.

Teaching and learning consultant Dr Mark Hay, former Executive Director of the HEQC, argued that universities risk becoming irrelevant and irresponsible if they don't equip staff to deal with the digital age. Dr Hay's address focused on the tyranny of conventional wisdom, particularly in education where "disruptive innovation" is forcing people to reconsider the foundations of teaching and learning. "Assumptions, inertia, scepticism and fear of change can create a toxic mix that hampers creativity, stifles innovation and holds back progress. When people aren't afraid to challenge conventional wisdom, that's when the magic happens. It's the sort of creativity that took man to the moon," Dr Hay said.

Dr Arno Louw, a teaching and learning consultant at the University of Johannesburg's Centre for Academic Technologies, Mpho Modipane, a lecturer at the University of Limpopo, and Prof Nokwethemba Ndlazi, Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences at MUT, formed a panel discussion that unpacked necessary 21st Century graduate attributes. The discussion, facilitated by Dr Hay, revealed that lecturers need to embrace technology in order to produce a 21st Century graduate that is ready for the workplace. The panel also concurred that institutions should expose students to international norms and culture and develop their leadership skills.

2016 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS HONOURS INNOVATIVE TEACHERS



Dr Manyane Makua, Sagree Naidoo, Mmamusa Lekoa, Xolile Mkhize, Charles Mothobiso, Professor Nokwethemba Ndlazi, Professor Mashupye Kgaphola and Pradesh Ramdeyal

The third annual Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Excellence Awards, held on 6 May 2016 in Durban, honoured outstanding MUT academics for their innovation and leadership in the classroom. The awards recognise the role played by academics in improving the teaching and learning experience.

The winners of the Gold Award in the Best Established Teacher category were Mammusa Lekoa, a Lecturer in the Department of Environmental Health, and Pradesh Ramdeyal, a Lecturer in the Department of Information & Communication Technology (ICT). They each received a cheque for R25 000 and an all-expenses-paid trip to the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA) International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED) Conference to be held in November

in Cape Town. Ramdeyal also received an all-expenses-paid trip to the South African Technology Network (SATN) Conference in Cape Town in October. As part of the award, each also received a teacher assistant on a one-year contract to help free them to conduct research on teaching and learning.

The Bronze Award in the Best Established Teacher category went to another ICT lecturer Sagree Naidoo and a senior lecturer in the Department of Community Extension, Xolile Mkhize. They each received a R12 500 cheque and an all-expenses-paid trip to the HELTASA ICED Conference. Xolile's response was: "I'm filled with gratitude towards the value of being an academic."

Charles Mothobiso, a Lecturer in the Department of Quantity Surveying

and Construction Management, won the Gold Award in the Best Emerging Teacher category. Charles received a cheque for R15 000 as well as the all-expenses-paid trip to the HELTASA ICED Conference.

All the winners also received other accessory prizes that included a Samsung Galaxy Tab4, courtesy of the TLDC, goodies hampers, book vouchers from Van Schaik Bookstore and trophies indicating their categories.

BUT THERE WAS MORE...

A notable addition to this year's awards was the inaugural Senate Award, which went to Gold award winner Mammusa Lekoa. The handsome Senate award included a cheque for R20 000 that will go towards a teaching and learning trust fund, a R50 000 contribution towards an international teaching and learning conference, and an all-expenses-paid trip to the 2016 SATN Conference in October.

On winning the inaugural Senate Award, Mammusa said: "The experience is humbling. It made me realise that as an individual who is not a teacher by profession, I am going in the right direction. It is putting pressure on me though, as it means that I have to intensify whatever I might be doing right and continue improving my teaching practices and approaches going forward."

OUT AND ABOUT

OUT AND ABOUT

AWARDS INSPIRE MORE UMLAZI SCHOOLS TO EXCEL



Velabahleke High received the Science kit sponsored by Willowton Group

The Circle of Excellence (COE) Awards have proven to be a true inspiration for the 28 high schools of Umlazi township. This was evident on 8 April 2016 when MUT hosted the fourth COE Awards to celebrate the victories of educators, school principals, school managers and district leaders who went an extra mile, often under very challenging conditions, to produce excellent results in Mathematics, Physical Science and Accounting.

MUT's brand promise is "In Pursuit of Excellence", and through these awards the University extends the pursuit of excellence to the schools of Umlazi where we hope to establish a long-lasting circle of excellence. These awards are also a demonstration of MUT's commitment to uplifting local schools and an appreciation of the fact that the University's success is dependent on the success of immediate neighbouring schools.

The 2016 COE Awards welcomed five new schools into the circle of winners: KwaMathanda High School, Isisusa High School, Isolemamba High School,

Zwelibanzi High School and Umlazi Senior Secondary. The most inspiring achievement was a 25% improvement in KwaMathanda High School's pass rate. This is strongly ascribed to the inspiration drawn from schools such as Menzi High School, which has dominated previous awards, consistently winning the award for the top-performing school among its peers.

A major motivator for the schools to qualify for the COE Awards is the educational resources to be won, such as mobile science kits, Mathematics resources and a number of other teaching aids given as prizes. This is made possible by MUT's association with major corporates who share the University's vision and are encouraged that the awards contribute to an improvement in the results of learners, particularly in Mathematics, Physical Science and Accounting. All the prizes given in 13 winning categories were donated by Lasec Edutrade, an international supplier of scientific and laboratory equipment; Willowton Group, a leading competitor in the South African FMCG market; Engen Oil, a reputable energy and fuel provider,

and Van Schaik Bookstore of KwaMnyandu Mall, an MUT's education partner which recently opened its doors in Umlazi. These corporate partners understand that if our schools produce excellent learners, the ripple effect is that the same learners will one day take their businesses to the top.

The COE Awards have not only inspired academic excellence; they have also strengthened stakeholder engagement activities between MUT, the schools and corporate partners. On 10 May a delegation from the three stakeholder groupings celebrated the handing over of laboratory equipment to the winning schools. Receiving the science kit at her school, Thoko Ndlovu, principal of KwaMathanda High School, said: "We appreciate the opportunities presented to us as Umlazi township schools by MUT. We have no excuse to underperform because not only do we get recognition through the Circle of Excellence Awards; we also receive the most important resources that will help us demonstrate the science lessons to our learners. This intervention also introduces our schools to sponsors. We are humbled today to host Mr Farouk Moosa, the Director of Willowton Group and Mr Ahmed Motala, the CEO of New Africa Education Foundation, at our school."

The impressive academic improvement at KwaMathanda High School is the result of a collective commitment by learners, educators and the school principal. "We set ourselves a target and the only way to achieve it was to put extra hours into our work. We start school at 6am every day and only finish at 4pm. We are making this sacrifice because we want to be part of the top achievers within Umlazi township," said Ndlovu.

SERVANT LEADER INSPIRES HIS MENTOR TO GREATNESS

MBONGENI MTSHALI RECEIVES THE INAUGURAL FELIX MSHOLOLO BRAND LEADERSHIP AWARD



Mbongeni Mtshali, middle, receives award from Mrs Mshololo

The inaugural Felix Mshololo Brand Leadership Award, presented to retired principal of Velabahleke High School, Mbongeni Mtshali on 8 April 2016 during the Circle of Excellence Awards, was a real preservation of the rich legacy left by the late principal of Menzi High School, Felix Mshololo. "Mangosuthu University of Technology takes pride in the fact that it was the first institution to recognise this servant leader for three years in succession before his passing. We are proud to inaugurate the Felix Mshololo Brand Leadership Award which was given to a principal who espouses the leadership qualities of Mshololo," said Mbalu Mkhize, Senior Director of Marketing and Communications at MUT.

Mbongeni Mtshali, who was the principal of this school for 26 years,

said: "Receiving this award takes me back to many successful projects that Felix and I worked on. I was much older than him and became his mentor. It is quite fitting that I receive the inaugural award." To ensure quality results, Mtshali forged partnerships with CHS Development, SAPREF, Wits University and UKZN. His school was listed by Prof Jonathan Jansen, the former Rector of the University of the Free State, as one of the top achieving schools in South Africa. In creating a national and international brand out of his school, Mtshali epitomises all the great qualities of a brand leaders like Mshololo.

The late Felix Hlanganani Mshololo left an indelible mark on people's lives. According to his wife, Nomasa Mshololo, his mission was to make a difference, be

it with family, friends, schools, community or church - and his networks had to have this viewpoint. As a servant leader, his weekends were devoted to community development and empowerment. During his formative years, working as a young teacher at Hammarsdale at the peak of black-on-black violence, he would assemble a few of his friends from Umlazi and run extra classes with them over weekends at Phezulu High School. At home, Nomasa remembered, "education was everything to him. He'd take his children to the library and encourage them to read newspapers and he would discuss the events of the day and the news. At his church, he had wide-ranging ideas for community upliftment, one of which was the introduction of awards for the church's top-performing learners."

That Menzi became Umlazi Township's best performing high school after Mshololo became principal, is not something to be taken lightly. To Nomasa's joy, the servant leader that Mshololo was at home was similar to the one he portrayed to society. "Just as he would sit with his six children one by one and check their homework, he also did the same for his learners at school. He would be the first one to see if something was amiss with his learners. One of the learners from the most impoverished families ended up being a Chartered Accountant, qualifying with a Bachelor of Accounting degree from UCT in record time through support from Mshololo," said a beaming Nomasa.

OUT AND ABOUT

A RECRUITMENT DRIVE TO INSPIRE A DIVERSE STUDENT POPULATION



MUT is waiting for you! Sarda Pillay talking to Swaziland grade 12 learners during the career exhibition

MUT is strengthening its student recruitment drives to achieve a diverse student population. This will ensure that by the time our students graduate, they have mastered cultural tolerance and appreciate the challenges experienced by learners from various corners of the African continent. During the first semester of 2016, MUT registered a large number of students from Swaziland, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Botswana, Cameroon, Burundi and Gambia.

To reach this far and wide, a strategic recruitment drive is necessary to position MUT outside South Africa. During the week of 11-16 April 2016, the MUT Schools Liaison team, led by Schools Liaison Officer, Sarda Pillay, embarked on a bumper-to-bumper recruitment drive in Swaziland. The team visited five districts, reaching out to 45 schools and providing essential application information to more than 3 000 high school learners.

"We are affiliated to the Career Exhibitions and Information Association (CEIA), which made it easy for us to get access to the schools. We also have a good relationship with the Ministry of Education in Swaziland which provided us with a database of top-performing schools which allowed us to engage a good calibre of potential students," said Sarda. Swazi students represent the highest number of international students at MUT and this makes it easy for MUT to showcase its programmes to potential students from Swaziland - most of whom either have a relative who is an MUT alumnus or have heard positive stories about MUT.

The highlight of the recruitment drive was receiving an endorsement by the Swaziland Ministry of Labour, which is the main funder of Swazi students studying outside the country. The ministry is very strict and has a select list of accredited higher education institutions they fund,

of which MUT is one. Since a number of learners come from very challenging financial backgrounds, this support from the ministry allows them an opportunity to pursue their studies in South Africa.

During back-to-back presentations to groups of students, learners were excited to learn about MUT's admission requirements to the three faculties and to hear about the affordable fee structure. Thrilled to be addressed by the MUT team was a group of learners from Florence Christian Academy in Shiselweni District, who visited MUT for a campus tour last year to get a taste of a South African higher education environment. "The time spent at MUT observing laboratory equipment and other state-of-the-art equipment encouraged our learners to work hard. The relationship with your institution has made it easy for our learners to make their career choices," said Gloria Simelane, a guidance counsellor at Florence Christian Academy.

EN-ROUTE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

EQUIP YOURSELF BEYOND THE WOW (WORLD OF WORK)

The world of work (WOW) is an exciting yet daunting new experience in a graduate's life. Experts say the ability to work in a team structure and to make decisions and solve problems, are the skills employers most want when they are deciding which graduates to hire. Over 30 companies exhibited at MUT's Annual Career Fair, a two-day event which offered our graduates an opportunity to gain insights and information on employment opportunities.

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM): "There has been an increase in women's entrepreneurship primarily due to government support, but the perception of opportunities to start a business, and

the confidence in one's ability to do so, remains alarmingly low."

A notable exception to this trend is MUT Marketing graduate turned entrepreneur, Zanele Gumede. She is the CEO of Maze Marketing and PR, a company dedicated to providing its clients with results-orientated marketing and advertising, client relations and public relations. Zanele graduated in April 2016 and her company has already worked with some recognisable South African brands such as Blue Label Telecoms, Miller Boomtown, Beyond Obligation Protection and Mustard Seed.

"I chose Marketing as a course not because I was desperate, but because

I've always dreamt of myself as a job creator, innovator, inventor and a born entrepreneur," said Zanele. She credits her three years of study at MUT for moulding and equipping her with the right skills to confidently start her business. "Studying Marketing helped me align myself with my goals; it gave me more knowledge on business and improved my corporate communication skills."

Zanele encourages our young alumni to "see possibilities everywhere...Do not be afraid to take risks – stand out and step out of your comfort zone". Maze Marketing was among the numerous companies exhibiting at the MUT Careers Fair.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

WHAT DO PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR IN GRADUATES?

Yolande Toohey, Regional Manager of Guarantee Trust, says: "With MUT, it is the type of qualification that graduates have that attracts us to them. We look for students who have a good command of English and speak with confidence. Code of conduct during the interview also plays an important role in how successful they are in an interview." Toohey further emphasises that as students have very high expectations nowadays, it is important that we are "all on the same page".

With so many graduates in the job market, the trick is to demonstrate that you have those skills through your cover letter, CV and interview - Nondumiso Matikinca, Recruitment Coordinator, MUT

Buyi Makhanya, Deputy Director of the Academic Literacy and Language Unit (ALLU) at MUT, adds that: "Our graduates must be able to compete globally with graduates from other institutions. We equip our graduates with verbal communication skills, presentation skills, goal setting skills and time management skills to ensure that they leave the institution as well-rounded graduates." ALLU provides academic literacy skills among other expertise.

BUILDING A NETWORK THAT CELEBRATES AND SUPPORTS MUT

The last decade has seen MUT growing at much faster pace, from 6 000 students to 10 000. Today, our students and academics cover the country in their search for knowledge and meaning, and their contributions make a difference everywhere. We celebrated the launch of the MUT Swaziland Chapter at the Alumni Reunion Dinner that was hosted by MUT in Swaziland on 15 April 2016.

The new chapter will serve as the leading voice in sharing the University's vision and accomplishments with Swaziland alumni, while celebrating their endeavours - both great and small - as the backbone of what makes our University great.

The gathering was a great platform for networking. The alumni nominated an executive committee that will ensure the sustainability of the chapter.

Members of the Executive Committee are:

- President - Thabiso Kunene (Chemical Engineering graduate)
- Deputy President - Bhekisisa Dlamini (Civil Engineering graduate)
- Treasurer - Dumisani Hlophe (Cost and Management Accounting graduate)
- Secretary - Hlobisile Bhembe-Ndabandaba (Marketing graduate)



Members of the Swaziland alumni chapter

SWAZILAND ALUMNI CHAPTER RISES TO THE CHALLENGE

One of the main objectives of alumni chapters is to contribute in financial and other meaningful ways to the advancement of MUT. The Swaziland Alumni Chapter has a Sponsor-a-Local-Student Campaign. This campaign aims to match financially deserving students

with alumni who are interested in giving back and aiding underprivileged students to accomplish their academic dreams.

Through this campaign, alumni will be afforded the opportunity to witness

first-hand the direct impact their contributions can make in changing someone's life. This campaign is informed by a simple yet very powerful philosophy: 'It takes a village to raise a child' and 'To those who are given more, more is expected'.

LEADER OF THE PACK

MUT alumnus and entrepreneur Thembinkosi Madikane, known as TC, continues to show his passion for ploughing back into the community through his role as the newly-appointed President of the South African Institute of Engineering (SAIEE) - a dedicated voluntary association for professional electrical and electronic engineers.

With over 20 years of experience as an electrical engineering consultant, Madikane focuses on energy management, power engineering and project management. His journey began in the late 1980s at MUT as an electrical engineering student. Today TC is a leading figure among the 'who's who' in Southern Africa.

IGODA PROJECTS

Madikane completed his matric at Dlangezwa High School in 1987. After finding out about MUT through a career exhibition in his hometown, he enrolled at MUT and completed his Diploma in Electrical Engineering.

His entrepreneurial flair surfaced in the very early stages of his career, after he was faced with a challenge many South African graduates face: unemployment. Without a formal job after graduating, Madikane used the knowledge and skills obtained from MUT to get himself odd jobs like fixing electrical appliances in his community in Port Shepstone. "I started fixing stoves and TVs to generate an income for myself. Unemployment teaches you independence," he said.

In 1992 Madikane joined the Department of Works as a qualified technician.

The new democracy in the country seized opportunities for black owned businesses and the aspiring young businessman didn't hesitate when an opportunity arose.



TC Madikane

In 2001 Madikane joined Igoda Projects as a director and shareholder. The company is the result of the merger of Magubane Consulting Engineers and Isibonelo Projects. "Igoda Consulting Engineering (ICE) collaborates with top world-wide corporations and leading architects – working as a team member or acting as programme manager – to provide professional services for the built environment, water, telecommunications, municipalities, hospitals, tourism, government departments, residential and commercial property developers. Some of Igoda's key projects include the Moses Mabhida stadium, and the extension of the ICC Arena and old Durban Airport," says Madikane.

Madikane has always been a proud alumnus and continues to plough back into his alma mater through his mentorship and incubation programme which began in 2004. Every year Igoda Projects provides Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) opportunities to MUT students.

SAIEE PRESIDENT

In his inaugural speech, under the presidential theme: "Are voluntary associations relevant or just old boys' clubs?", one of Madikane's focal points was encouraging scholars to study electrical engineering as a preferred career.

The association has 6400 members, and Madikane said he wanted to implement the following during his one-year term as SAIEE President:

- Increase membership by 100%;
- Ensure that electrical engineering practitioners plough back into the community;
- Collaborate with industry and increase corporate partners;
- Encourage electrical engineers to lead by example; and
- Increase awareness about SAIEE.

Madikane said: "By next year I would have attended more than 100 functions as President of the SAIEE with the aim of creating brand visibility." Madikane is also a member of the Engineering Council of South Africa's (ECSA) registration committee.

MUT RESEARCH EFFORTS LAUDED BY MINISTER NALEDI PANDOR



Minister Pandor MP, addressing the delegates

MUT's first-ever Research and Innovation (R&I) Week, held in Durban on 6-10 June 2016, was commended by the institution's local and international partners as well as government. It also showed an institution that is championing the cause of transformation.

MUT's designation as a University of Technology in 2007 not only opened potential avenues to enhance its contribution to innovation and research, but it brought about an opportunity for the University to reposition itself in a variety of academic activities.

The Research and Innovation Portfolio's core function is to establish the University as a research institution where innovative thinkers can flourish and innovative ideas are rewarded, while becoming one of the leading providers of postgraduate programmes in Africa. Prof Zodwa Dlamini, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagements, admitted that MUT had the lowest research output across the board - hence the need to develop a modest research profile. She said that doing so would involve a change

of attitude by University staff "if it is to yield the anticipated results of a new institutional identity and culture and produce a growing cohort of active researchers".

She added, "MUT has a Research and Innovation Framework that takes into consideration the South African National Research and Development Strategy, as well as the country's 10-year Innovation Plan that guides the research priorities of South Africa and the sub-Saharan-region." Driven by a desire to explore new worlds and to apply new ideas to real-world problems, the Research and Innovation Framework's four core focus areas are Renewable Energy, Human Settlements, Agriculture and Food Security and Health. "These focus areas will be developed and strengthened in order to build research at MUT. Much of the current research conducted at MUT falls into these focus areas, which represent progressive areas of opportunity that will allow MUT to distinguish itself," said Prof Dlamini.

The institution's bold stance on research and innovation was lauded by Naledi Pandor, Minister of Science and

Technology, whose department has invested heavily in research and innovation in South Africa. "We all hope that MUT's research profile will grow. However, it is imperative for MUT to design a well-considered research strategy that allows it to develop a distinct set of programmes and focus areas that do not seek to mirror a research-intensive University," she said.

Minister Pandor continued: "All reports on women's participation in science and allied disciplines indicate that despite positive progress, women lag behind males. More women have entered science faculties, but they tend to be in the life and health sciences, and not in engineering, physical sciences or information technologies." She said that women tend to stop at the Honours level and their numbers decline further at Master's, doctoral and postdoctoral levels.

Minister Pandor stressed the need for more MUT academics to obtain their PhDs "if you are to help South Africa reach its National Development Plan target of training 6 000 PhDs a year. MUT has no Master's and doctoral students even though the number of active researchers increased from 55 in 2013 to 72 in 2015. Most active MUT researchers are pursuing their own postgraduate studies and are not supervising students."

She advised however that given MUT's lack of PhDs, "the assistance of international partners is vital. Our relations with various countries, philanthropic institutions and multilateral forums around the globe hold a number of potential opportunities for PhD students". According to the ministerial guidelines on transformation and fellowships, the National Research Foundation has ring-fenced support for full-time PhD studies abroad and through sandwich programmes.

CAREER IMPRINTS

PREVIOUS POSITIONS

Chairman of Service Delivery Committee | Mhlathuze Water | 2013 - September 2015

Government, Public Administration and Defence

Non-Executive Director | Mhlathuze Water | 2011 - September 2015

Chairperson of Industrial Advisory Committee | Mangosuthu University of Technology | 2005 - 2010

Prof Dlamini said the Research and Innovation Portfolio is working on a number of proposed projects that will advance the institution's research agenda. "MUT is currently in the process of raising funds to establish a multi-disciplinary research institute that will be situated at the SA Medical Research Council in Durban. It will boast state-of-the-art facilities for the practical training of staff and students in the fields of science, technology, natural and applied sciences," she said. The new campus will be aimed at addressing structural and infrastructural deficiencies that limit science, technology and research capabilities within MUT.

Other projects include the following:

- The proposed inclusion of the Technology Innovation Agency's (TIA) Bioprocessing Platform into the MUT

research, innovation and technology transfer structure looking at vaccine development. This initiative will benefit the province as well as our sister institutions.

- The acquisition of an experimental farm that will help undergraduates conduct practical assessments and also train them in commercial production that will enable them to gain confidence to own their farming businesses and also create jobs.
- Research Chairs that will mentor academic staff to strengthen research within the University, source external research funding, and train postdoctoral and postgraduate students. These will also assist in creating national and international research partnerships that will further strengthen research at MUT.

Minister Pandor applauded Prof Dlamini's efforts to advance the development of women in science in South Africa. "You are redefining the role of MUT, making it more responsive to industry, and more closely linked to the local and regional economy. We need more entrepreneurs, more innovators, and more inventors in South Africa. The research you do at MUT helps us show the way," she remarked.

Prof Dlamini added: "I trust that you will give serious consideration to helping us realise our vision of being a pre-eminent higher education institution of technology that fosters socio-economic advancement through the scholarship of research, technology development and transfer, and community engagement."

MUT INNOVATIONS ADDRESS ENERGY CHALLENGES

The first MUT Research and Innovation (R&I) Week showcased a number of creative innovations, showing just how serious the institution is about research. The week-long programme, held on 6-10 June in Durban, was jam-packed with something for everyone who's "tuned into" and keen about research.

The event also provided a platform for cross-disciplinary engagements between MUT researchers, academics, business and government. Driven by a desire to explore new worlds and apply new ideas to real-world problems, the innovations spoke to the core research themes of the MUT R&I Framework: Renewable Energy, Human Settlements, Agriculture, and Food Security and Health.

In an effort to find viable and sustainable green technology options, a cohort of MUT students launched a new mobile application, the Green App, aimed at promoting the use of green energy and energy-saving among students. The application (app) calculates electricity usage and how much it costs to have selected household appliances switched on at any given time. It can also perform an energy audit - an assessment of the energy needs and efficiency of a building.

The Green App also boasts a social feature allowing users of the application to communicate with each other.

Green App developer, Welcome Malamlela, a final-year ICT student, worked with students from the MUT Green Campus Initiative and Prof Senzo Malinga's Centre for the Development of Green Technologies. "The app has a news feed feature that constantly updates and informs users of the latest green technology, events and further educational links on green technology. It also has a 'talk-back' feature where users can ask specific questions and the app will respond with the best possible answer," said Malamlela.

The app is, for now, available on the Google Android operating system, while advances are being made for it to be made available on Apple iOS, Windows, Blackberry OS and the like. Malamlela added: "The application is available to student structures within MUT and on various platforms. We are engaging with Google South Africa to get the application approved so that it can be available on the Google Playstore by the second semester." Below is a snapshot of other innovations that were showcased at the R&I Week:

GREY WATER GEL - DAVE PONS:

- This invention converts grey waste water into a slow-release fertiliser. Converting grey waste water into plant food will help solve the waste water problem and grow food at the same time.

GREEN FENCE - PROF PETER SMALL AND DAVE PONS:

- This invention was motivated by the need to provide low-cost fencing to allow people to grow their crops and protect them from roaming animals. The fence is equipped with a metal strip on the top that serves an electric charge/shock if anyone touches it. The strip is powered by a solar battery.

BIOKINETIC ENERGY BIKE – DR BABATUNDE BAKARE

- The Biokinetic Energy Bike uses human energy to generate electricity and power. The power from the bike can be used to power office buildings, homes, computers and other appliances.

FOCUS: RESEARCH AND INNOVATION WEEK

RESEARCH & INNOVATION WEEK ATTENDED BY BUSINESS INNOVATORS FROM GAUTENG



MUT R&I Week drew a number of speakers. Business women, researchers address the delegates, from left, Dr S Gumbi, Dr K Mawila, Amelia Ramphadi, Makekele Somo

MUT's Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagements, Prof Zodwa Dlamini's call for innovation to be a big part of research was heeded by many who attended MUT's Research and Innovation Week in June. Among the delegates were two businesswomen from Gauteng, Makekele Somo and Amelia Ramphadi, who founded companies in 2011 and 2012 respectively.

They took a plunge into the unknown, hoping that their instinct and knowledge would not only sustain them but also help them rise above many others in business, while also creating job opportunities for other people. Makekele is a managing director of Elvema Nutrition, an instant food manufacturing company, while

Amelia is Managing Director of AmiSkin Products, a company that manufactures skin and hair products, together with the perfume from a plant called moringa.

Amelia said she spotted a gap in the market. "I noticed that some African women had problems with some products that they were using. I figured that I could do something about that. Also, most women are unemployed.

We wanted to look beautiful while making money." Amelia's company plants moringa, harvests it and processes it into a fine product which it sells to 77 agents who then sell it to the public to make profits. Amelia proudly noted that her product - which she uses herself - is

well researched, has no side effects and is dermatologically tested by the CSIR.

According to <https://www.reference.com/health/health-benefits-moringa-herb-6d53c803ae39784>:

"the plant is commonly eaten in Africa and India. Moringa is used to treat epilepsy, ulcers in the stomach and intestines, headaches and heart problems, states WebMD. It is also used for high blood pressure, kidney stones and bacterial, viral, parasitic and fungal infections. Moringa can reduce fluid retention, treat thyroid disorders, reduce swelling and increase breast milk production. Some people take moringa to boost the immune

system. Moringa contains minerals, vitamins and proteins, and it can be used as an antioxidant to prevent harm to cells.

"Moringa is sometimes used as an astringent to dry the skin. People may apply it directly to the skin to treat abscesses, warts, and wounds and snake bites, notes WebMD. It may also help to treat athlete's foot, dandruff and gingivitis. Moringa seeds are sometimes used to make oil, which is used in hair products, foods and perfume. After extracting the oil, the seed cake can be used to purify water and as a fertilizer. Moringa is grown cheaply and easily, and it remains nutritious when dried."

Amelia's business is in Bramley, five kilometres from Sandton in Johannesburg. AmiSkin is a member of the Cosmetic Toiletries and Fragrance Association

(CTFA). Amelia talks passionately about her product, and rightly so. In a conversation with Prof

Roger Cooposamy, an award-winning researcher and senior lecturer in the Department of Nature Conservation at MUT, it became clear that Amelia was on the right track. Prof Cooposamy, who has a PhD in Botany, confirmed that the plant can indeed be processed into a good skin product. This will give an extra spring in the step of the people who buy the product from Amelia, and sell for themselves. But most importantly, Prof Cooposamy offered to work with both Amelia and Makekele in doing more research about their innovative ideas.

Makekele's Elvema Nutrition, which employs 57 people and will soon expand to 184, manufactures instant nutritional

products like porridges for children, adults and the aged. All their porridges come in five different flavours - banana, apple, strawberry, vanilla and chocolate. "We also produce Elvema Moringa Tea, power shakes, and energy bars," said Makekele, adding that they recently introduced an Elvema Nutritional Supplement range in the form of a capsule that works in conjunction with any chronic medication.

Being a clinical researcher made it possible for Makekele to go into this kind of business. She said numerous studies are being done on nutrition because many people nowadays are going the organic route. With lifestyle diseases on the increase, more consumers are checking what they eat, she said. She is also interested in collaborating with MUT to run clinical trials on her new range of supplements.

ASPIRING TO INSPIRE LIFE-LONG LEARNING

MASTER OF NATURE CONSERVATION: A FIRST IN THE COUNTRY, A FIRST FOR MUT

Prof Peter Small is a professor on a mission. Having spent more than two decades at MUT as a lecturer, HOD and now Professor of Nature Conservation, he understands very well that when a postgraduate qualification is on offer at a university, students will continue to pursue terminal degrees.

His department has made a landmark achievement in receiving accreditation for the first Master's level qualification at MUT. This is a significant step in opening the door to the development of postgraduate programmes at MUT. Although MUT has committed itself to being predominantly a diploma-granting institution, it has qualified this by committing itself to the development of postgraduate programmes in specific areas that warrant this. The accreditation the Master of Nature Conservation degree fits in perfectly with the

University's mission to provide advanced, technology-based programmes and services that are career- and business-oriented. The programme is designed to provide coursework in the fields of strategic management within the nature conservation sector, while simultaneously providing tools to enhance research capability.

Clearly, this achievement goes beyond being a departmental and faculty victory. Prof Small said: "The University's reputation will be enhanced by it becoming a recognised postgraduate degree-granting institution, which will also assist in enhancing the reputation of the undergraduate programmes offered. In addition the subsidy income of the University will be significantly increased, as will the University's research output. The approval of the first Master's level qualification has broken new ground, and

will make it easier for future applications from the University to offer other programmes at this level."

The road towards attaining this status has been a long and winding one. The Department of Nature Conservation first applied to offer a Master of Technology in Nature Conservation in 1995. This application and subsequent applications were rejected by the Department of Education, until the Minister imposed a moratorium on MUT offering postgraduate qualifications between 2000 and 2005. The promulgation of the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework in 2013 proved to be a pivotal point in the applications procedure, with the Department of Nature Conservation being accredited to offer the Postgraduate Diploma in Nature Conservation in 2015, and now receiving full accreditation for the Master's programme.

For Prof Small, "The qualities required to attain this in the department were highly qualified and motivated staff, low staff turnover, tenacity and perseverance. Fortunately many of the hurdles that prevented the earlier offering of a Master's qualification have now been removed, and future applications - including that of the Doctor of Nature Conservation - should now meet less opposition."

With a few exceptions, such as pending registration with the South African Qualifications Authority and funding approval by the Department of Higher Education and Training, the department is ready; syllabi have been developed and the marketing drive to recruit the best students has begun.

MUT STUDENTS OPTIMISE OPPORTUNITIES AT THE MUT R&I WEEK



Dr Jasper Rees of ARC, and Zoleka Ngcete of SAMRC (obscured) having a discussion with MUT students

MUT students received an opportunity to learn and present their innovative ideas at the University's Research & Innovation Week in June. The fourteen MUT students who attended said they left the

conference as "changed people".

One such student was Ntsika Makaula from Mount Frere in the Eastern Cape, who got the opportunity to test his

research ideas with Zoleka Ngcete from SAMRC.

One group of students was drawn from Prof Senzo Malinga's Centre for the Development of Green Technologies (CDGT) initiative, the "MUT GREEN Campus". Prof Malinga, a Certified Energy Manager (CEM), is the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering at MUT. The project has given students who are members of the "Green MUT" a chance to be creative and use their young but powerful voices to pass the message onto everyone. Nokwanda Sikhakhane, the "Green Campus" secretary, held delegates spellbound at the R&I Week - the most impressed being Prof Ramesh Kanwar from the University of Hawaii, who encouraged students to keep dreaming.



Members of the Nature Conservation department, from left, Dr K Naidoo, L Mbuyisa, Prof G McDonald, S Nkosi, Dr G Arthur, Prof R Cooposamy

ASPIRING TO INSPIRE COMMUNITIES

CEILING-IN-A-CAN RECOGNISED AT ECO-LOGIC AWARDS



Dave Pons being interviewed by the media about his invention

The MUT patented “Ceiling in a Can” (CiC), developed by Dave Pons (a lecturer and innovator in the Department of Agriculture), was a finalist in the Eco-Logic Awards. These prestigious awards recognise energy-saving endeavours in South Africa and are supported by SABC TV 1 as well as major chain stores and multinational companies.

The CiC was deemed to be an energy-saving innovation that has the potential to mitigate global warming and allow poor people to live better lives. Selected as a semi-finalist for the 2015/2016 Eco-Logic Awards from over 126 applications,

the CiC received a bronze award for eco innovation.

Dave Pons was inspired to create the product by the “millions of middle-class people living in low-cost houses and even more people living in shacks in informal settlements. Very few of these houses have been built with ceilings; yet ceilings insulate against the heat of summer and the cold of winter and hence reduce electricity consumption as there is less need for fans and heaters”.

His CiC invention addresses a range of social/economic problems by:

- Allowing for better living conditions in informal or low-cost houses. With a ceiling, the house will be cooler in summer and warmer in winter.
- Saving on electricity by reducing the need for heating and cooling appliances.
- Increasing residents’ pride in their homes and boosting their self-esteem as a ceiling is a symbol of status in low-cost homes.
- Providing jobs for contractors who can negotiate bulk discounts and offer an efficient and professional service. It is estimated that the CiC will create more than 4 000 jobs (for contractors and their assistants) within three years. The financial outlay to start a ceiling installation business using the CiC is small, as no vehicle or tools are required.

CiC has made a thorough start by filing a patent, finalising the testing and completing pilot projects. This has laid a strong foundation for a robust and highly scalable business that uses new technology to create better living conditions for people living in small or informal houses.

The project is currently funded by the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) which has invested R450 000 in the development of the project, as well as the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA) which has invested R448 010 in the further development of this technology.

FOUR MUT STAFF MEMBERS OBTAIN PHDS

FOUR MUT STAFF HAVE JOINED THE GROWING COHORT OF MUT STAFF WITH PhDs. THEY ALL GRADUATED FROM UKZN DURING THE 2016 GRADUATION SEASON.



Prof Nokwethemba Ndlazi

is the Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences. Her thesis is titled, “First-year Engineering students’ concept development of integral calculus at a South African University of Technology”. The main aim of her study was to explore engineering students’ construction of knowledge in integral calculus. The study was underpinned by an interpretive paradigm. She employed APOS theory as a theoretical framework to determine the level of mental constructions that engineering students make while learning techniques of integration.



Dr Lindelani Qwabe

is a lecturer in the Department of Chemistry. His thesis is on catalysis, a division of Chemistry that focuses on design, characterisation and testing of catalytic systems for various industrial applications. His thesis is entitled “CO oxidation in a hydrogen rich feed stream for use in fuel cells”. It focuses on the development of mixed metal oxide and gold promoted mixed metal oxide catalysts for the oxidation of carbon monoxide in a hydrogen stream. South Africa, like other technologically advancing countries, is investigating the possibility of developing fuel cell technology for vehicular, industrial and domestic use. The thesis addresses the elimination of carbon monoxide from the hydrogen-dominant reformat gas since it poisons platinum electrodes in fuel cells.



Dr Phwayinkosi Gumede

is the Deputy Director of the Teaching and Professional Development Unit (TPDU) within the Teaching and Learning Development Centre (TLDC). His thesis is titled “The respiratory health effects associated with particulate matter (PM2.5) exposure in children residing near a landfill site: a case of eThekweni Municipality”. His research focused on the respiratory health of children aged 6-12 who live within a 2km radius of Durban’s Bisasar Road landfill site, which is one of the biggest in Africa. His research will help shape future decisions regarding the placement of landfill sites within cities.



Dr Makhosi Buthelezi

is an Agricultural Scientist at the Institute for Rural Development and Community Engagement (IRDCE). Her thesis is titled “Investigations into the incidence and ecology of Bilobata Subsecivella (Zeller) (Lepidoptera: Gelechiidae), a new pest of groundnut in South Africa”. Her research was on the ecology and genetics of a new pest affecting groundnut and soya bean in South Africa, namely the groundnut leaf miner (GLM), which was thought to be Aproaerema modicella (Deventer) a species that originated from Indo-Asia.

LET'S START WRITING POETRY AGAIN, IT CAN ONLY MAKE US BETTER

- DIANA BLOEM, A DALRO AWARD WINNER

MUT has had at least two arts festivals through which it is trying to revive this area of human expression and show that putting the arts at the back of the queue can be counter-productive. Leaders of the project, like Prof Senzo Malinga CEM, the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, would be quite happy that at MUT there is an academic who has made writing poems an academic hobby. She has a Master's in this area from UKZN and is currently pursuing her PhD at the same institution. This is Diana Bloem, a lecturer in the Department of Communication and a mother of three children that she would gladly pull into the "Mommy's Bed-time" Reading Club, of which she is a member.

Diana's love for poetry writing has won her a poetry prize from the Dramatic Artistic and Literary Rights Organisation (DALRO). The winning poem, "One Dishwasher", was used as part of her Master of Arts dissertation titled "Letters to Who: An original cycle of poetry that explores the confluence of space, the quotidian and memory in contemporary suburban South Africa". The poem is published by the Institute for the Study of English in Africa (IESA) in New Coin, a South African literary journal. The poem is about the inner experience of an unnamed woman persona, and begins with an ordinary



Diana Bloem showing a book that has her award-winning poem

middle-class household appliance, the dishwasher. By the end the woman persona has revealed vulnerable detail about her past. "The dishwasher" is one of many poems that Bloem has written for her Master's.

Talking about the poem, Diana says she was inspired by her supervisor, Dr Kobus Moolman. "A few random words were the beginning and somewhere 'One Dishwasher' emerged. Many people mistakenly believe that to write you need to have an extraordinary experience, and then you have worthwhile material. However, to truly give people a voice,

one needs to tell the stories that happen every day - the ordinary life. In a TED talk, the writer Lauren Beukes speaks about how stories allow us to be more than we are. "This concept of allowing us to become something bigger makes me think of the many people who have no voice because of the socio-political factors which prevent the necessary narratives from being heard. I hope that somehow in my writing, I can give marginalised voices a platform," says Beukes.

Diana says that poetry readership in South Africa is very low and is undervalued. Many people have come to see poetry as having little aesthetic value, she says. "Yet, as a writer of poetry, crafting a poem requires the writer to make choices and often the writer makes choices about what to write and how to write based on their current personal experiences. Protest poetry is one clear example of what I am trying to say. South African protest poets capture a mood that is felt in the communities by ordinary people. These poets have witnessed people (or even themselves experienced) living in fear or despair. Often mood and feelings are seen not only through the words, but also the form of the poems. I believe by not reading, we are growing more isolated instead of unified," concluded Diana.

CHEERS AS US ACADEMIC ORGANISATION COURTS MUT

On 11 April 2016, MUT welcomed five esteemed visitors from the National Association of African American Studies and Affiliates (NAAAS), which comprises members from various United States universities. NAAAS was founded in 1992 at Virginia State University by a group of College of Social Sciences staff members including the current executive director, Dr Lemuel Berry, Jr. The main goal of NAAAS is to provide university staff and students globally an opportunity to engage in scholarly endeavours.

NAAAS's objectives are to promote acquaintanceship and group effort among those interested in African Americans, Hispanics, Latinos and Chicanos, Native Americans and Asians, and to further the cause of research in these areas. It also aims to provide research and information on African American, Hispanic, Latinos and Chicanos, Native American and Asian Studies in publications and a refereed journal.

The purpose of the NAAAS visit to MUT was to invite MUT to join the organisation so that the University could benefit from its wide range of activities, which include working with academics from the US and other universities in writing academic papers and getting them published; and also having MUT staff participating in exchange programmes. University staffers from various countries would work



MUT's Mbali Mkhize, third from right, shaking hands with Marisol Joseph-Haynes of NAAAS

in a US university for a certain period, sharing ideas with staff. They would earn a stipend paid by the host university, which also pays for their accommodation. Such visiting members would only pay for traveling expenses.

Mbali Mkhize, Senior Director of the Department of Marketing and Communications at MUT, said "On behalf of the DVC: Research, Innovation and Engagements who is on research travel status, MUT would be happy to partner with NAAAS, and would wait for the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) from NAAAS's director. Our Marketing and Communications department is a member of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). It is associations of this nature with one's counterparts that enable us to learn more

from the US." NAAAS invited MUT to take part in its series of conferences, forums and programmes, even if it was not yet a formal partner of the organisation.

Dr Berry said the association's main goal was to improve relations between the peoples of the different countries by ensuring they received better education. Some of NAAAS's programmes are the International Research Forum, an annual programme that rotates between the US and universities outside that country; the Joint Research Project, in which NAAAS facilitates arrangements for scholars in identical or related fields of study to establish research partnerships; and the National Conference comprising more than 600 research presentations representing more than 20 countries.



Dr Sentsho, the Student Ombudsman

MEET MUT'S FIRST STUDENT OMBUDSPERSON

Management Advancement Programme certificate from Wits Business School. His office is located within the Quality Management Directorate (QMD).

The office of the Student Ombudsman, which functions independently with respect to case handling, was established to focus on student issues referred to it by the Office of the DVC: Teaching and Learning. Dr Sentsho says the office of the Student Ombudsman is mandated to provide dispute resolution to the University's current students according to the principles of fairness and justice. It must ensure that students have access to a neutral, independent and confidential structure to address their complaints, inquiries, concerns about alleged acts, omissions, and other problems in a fair, equitable and cost-effective manner. His brief is to investigate students' issues, make findings and recommendations

and report to the office of the DVC: Teaching and Learning. Dr Sentsho said that confidentiality is at the centre of the office's operations. "This is critical as it offers the complainants an opportunity to express themselves without any fear or hindrance," he said.

The office gives priority to the quality of services provided and compliance with institutional policies and procedures. "The Student Ombudsman ensures that students' rights are well taken care of by dealing in the best manner possible with their complaints," said Dr Sentsho.

Since January 2016 the Office has dealt with several complaints of sexual harassment and academic performance, or the lack thereof, of students. Dr Sentsho will be acting in this position from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016.

MINISTER SISULU IMPRESSED BY MUT'S NEW STUDENT RESIDENCE

While attending the Faculty of Engineering graduation ceremony on 22 April 2016, MUT's Chancellor, Ms Lindiwe Sisulu MP, took time to visit the newly-built 640-bed student residence on the main campus. The SAnews.gov.za website quoted the Minister of Human Settlements as saying that she was proud of the teamwork between management, academics and students, all of whom were committed to ensuring that students achieved the best. Sisulu said the residence symbolised what a modern student residence should be.

"The student residence must be secure, modern and with all amenities required by students," said Minister Sisulu. The Minister also thanked private companies

that are supporting MUT in its quest to provide excellent academic programmes and a secure environment for students. "Mangosuthu University of Technology is a good story, a story of students, management and academics working together to achieve the best for students and the University," Sisulu said.

The opening of the new residence will go a long way towards solving the University's accommodation challenges. Students are currently being ferried from rented residences in town to campus, which is time-consuming and expensive for all concerned. This development comes at a time when South African universities are struggling with student residences, a contentious issue



MUT Chancellor, Ms Sisulu, third from left, being taken around the new student residence by Prof Khehla Ndlovu, right, DVC Resources and Planning

that crops up at the beginning of every year. The Minister is also aware of the University's other infrastructure plans. MUT is currently building a Student Centre that is expected to be completed in 18 months. Next will be the Engineering laboratories and offices. These are part of a bigger plan that will cost more than R1 billion and change the landscape of the University for the better.

PROF MSOMI INSPIRES MATHS TEACHERS TO ASPIRE TO GREATNESS



Prof Alfred Msomi addressing the conference

MUT continues to work with mathematics educators in an effort to improve the standard of the subject in the country. Irshad Motala from the KZN Department of Education, addressing about 300 delegates who attended the AMESA conference at MUT on 7 May 2016, said

that the pass rate in mathematics still leaves a lot to be desired.

Prof Alfred Msomi, Head of the Department of Mathematical Sciences at MUT, and Chair of AMESA in KwaZulu-Natal, said the purpose of this annual conference was to bring together maths educators in the province to share ideas about the subject. "We want educators to talk about the different strategies they could use to teach mathematics. We also would like to encourage these educators at branch levels to actively participate in teaching the subject. We would like them to be part of several maths projects, like 'Maths Challenge', 'Problem Solving' and 'How I Teach Maths'."

Although most speakers at the conference were drawn from KZN universities, Prof Msomi pointed out that "this time there were also two educators who were speakers.

We want the educators to take ownership of the conference". One of the educators who presented a paper was Nompumelelo Mbokazi, a mathematics educator at Dr JL Dube High School in KwaMashu, Durban.

During the breakaway sessions, educators gave presentations on how they teach maths, which gave them a chance to learn from each other. Biyisiwe Ncala, a maths educator from Siphosethu Primary School in Ntuzuma, Durban, said she learnt from others easy and more effective ways of teaching the subject, and how to tackle maths problems. She said the conference also boosted her confidence.

This provincial conference is a forerunner of the national congress that will be held in July. During the conference, the provincial AMESA Executive gave a report to the national AMESA Executive.

MUT SENATE TAKES A BOLD STANCE ON XENOPHOBIA AND TRIBALISM

At its meeting of 26 May 2016, the MUT Senate was shocked to learn that some staff members in one academic department have resorted to fomenting xenophobia against some expatriate staff for their own selfish motives. The MUT Senate is appalled that in this day and age there are some academics who see nothing wrong with xenophobia.

This is even more disturbing because, by its very nature and purpose, a university must have a universal and international character as it sources professional skills and students from the whole world. The MUT Senate condemns, in no uncertain terms, the recent resurgence of xenophobia within the University and reiterates the fact that as a university community made up of staff and students

from various backgrounds, we cannot and must not allow primitive prejudices and instincts to overshadow the good that MUT stands for.



The Senate notes with appreciation the statement of support for the fight against xenophobia as expressed by the SRC President Mr Ronnie Madlala. The Senate also applauds the SRC for its self-initiated

fight against tribalism among students and hereby pledges its support.

The Senate calls upon all members of the MUT community to join it in the fight against xenophobia and tribalism and urges that this campaign must be informed by our institutional values, which are:

- To act with integrity in our interactions with others;
- To create a climate of innovation;
- To be at the forefront of technology development and transfer;
- To take accountability for our conduct;
- To promote self-respect in all our actions and to show respect for others; and
- To strive for excellence in what we do.

MUT BIDS FAREWELL TO 'MR STABILITY'

It's only because of his inner strength that Mthoko Ntuli, the Student Development Officer in the Department of Student Affairs, did not weep while making his speech in farewell to Thami Mchunu, the dean of the department, on 13 June 2016.

Mthoko, who joined the department from the University's Financial Aid Bureau, told colleagues that he had found a 'brother' in Thami and learnt a lot from him in the last seven-and-a-half years. "The journey was hard. We had so many challenges," he said. It was such challenges that made the two men better men, and transformed MUT into a stable university while other universities in the country were incurring losses amounting to millions of rand because of students' unsavoury behaviour.

Any South African familiar with our national higher education landscape has some idea of how tough it is to deal with students, who have all kinds of problems and different political minds. This mixture, plus the exuberance of youth and a very difficult-to-harness raw power and confidence that is not supported by firm knowledge of the world and its challenges, make a student a hard nut to crack. In many cases students tend to first attempt to honour other obligations while leaving their studies to last. Getting them back on track is not so easy. A parent who does not know what to do with a rebellious child does indeed have a big problem!

How were Thami and Mthoko to deal with this situation that was so familiar across the country? If you knew their profiles, you would bet that either one of the two men, prior to 2012, would have picked up his ball, folded his tent and headed home. But no. Together with the University management, they put together a plan, a plan that has now made MUT a beacon of hope to all other higher education institutions because of its stability. In 2012 they introduced a series of workshops to teach student

leaders the importance of democracy, and how anyone can benefit from this ancient philosophy. The running thread of the workshops was that "you can't call yourselves a democracy when you not willing to embrace all its aspects, particularly its main ones – the right to choose who to associate with; the need to accept the results of democratic elections, no matter their level; and the fact that everyone gains from democracy, which is why it is so popular".



Thami Mchunu, holding the picture, with some of the Student Affairs staff

Clearly the message has taken hold of the MUT students, and a very stable university has been the result. Awareness raising continues to take place in the form of "social cohesion" workshops. Prof Marcus Ramogale, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, could not have said it any better: "Mr Mchunu is credited with bringing stability to this University".

Mr Stability's car was seen on campus even during weekends. Eight hours of normal work per day were not enough! Experts were brought to lecture the students on and off campus; and even the Cutty Sark, a hotel on the KZN south coast, can tell part of this marvellous story. Thami Mchunu understood the University's strengths, and played to them.

MUT officials are often ambushed with this question: "How did you guys do it?" Note that this question is asked by some of the most brilliant minds in the country, who

really struggle to deal with the students' demands (particularly last year when students demanded the scrapping of the annual fee increase at their universities). Anyone who looked south of Durban found a quiet university. Anyone who scanned the newspapers would not find a lone screaming headline about Mangosuthu University of Technology.

Mr Stability's plan was working, though he was not making any noise about it. MUT continued to hold its pole position in terms of student throughput rate - a direct result of the stability brought about by Thami Mchunu and his department.

Mthoko's long speech, which clearly showed what a brave and forward-looking man he has become, posed a challenge to MUT: "Are you going to build on what my 'brother' Thami has begun or, like some leaders in parts of the world, destroy it and start all over again?"

Responding, Thami (a man of few words who at times

had to be nudged to the podium to drive a programme) requested MUT to look after itself. "I hope you will continue to preserve and protect our resources," he said. Thami has mastered the art of talking – you have a chance to make an impact if your speech is short.

A long speech gives you a chance to step on your tongue. The few words are most likely still ringing in his former colleagues' ears. All the speakers from his department thanked Thami for teaching them a thing or two. They have lost a leader in Macingwane (Thami's clan name)!

As Thami drives towards the north of the province, he will feel a great sense of satisfaction for a job well done with his team. He will still be able to offer that reluctant but gentlemanly smile every time he bumps into MUT colleagues, most of whom he shared 15 years with at the University.

INSPIRED BY THE SUCCESS OF ANOTHER SISTER

"You have done a great job Prof Ndlazi and as senior sisters at MUT; we would not have stood by and not planned a surprise party on your success", said Precious Lugayeni, the head of the Department of Economics, at a congratulatory party she secretly planned with a few heads of departments and senior directors for Prof Nokwethemba Ndlazi when Prof Ndlazi, the Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, received her PhD in Mathematics Education in April this year.

"I would also like to thank my husband, who constantly reminded me how important it was for me to carry on and finish my degree,"

Speaker after speaker mentioned how they had been inspired by the perseverance Nokwe had shown. The visibly shocked, but very happy Prof

Ndlazi, took some time to recover from the ambush by her 'sisters'. Prof Ndlazi thanked her colleagues, some of whom she has spent close to 20 years with MUT for having encouraged her to continue with her PhD, even when times were difficult. "I would also like to thank my husband, who constantly reminded me how important it was for me to carry on and finish my degree," Prof Ndlazi said. The story of Prof Ndlazi is one great inspiration for many MUT staff.



Prof Nokwethemba Ndlazi, facing the camera, could not contain her surprise when her 'sisters' pleasantly ambushed her

A MEANINGFUL VICTORY FOR MUT STAFF

CONTRACT STAFF CONVERTED TO PERMANENT APPOINTMENTS



MUT NEHAWU's Linda Nzama

The MUT branch of NEHAWU is celebrating a victory for MUT staff. NEHAWU has been in negotiations with management since 2011 regarding the status of contract staff at the University. These culminated in the signing of an agreement that converted the contract workers to permanent staff on 10 June 2016.

The signing of this agreement changes the lives of the 78 affected MUT staff in a fundamental way. Speaking on the significance of this milestone, NEHAWU MUT's shop steward, Linda Nzama, said: "This victory is for workers, some of whom are not even members of NEHAWU. We are proud of what we have managed to gain for MUT staff and celebrate the victory that this represents for them and their families. NEHAWU is a progressive union that is driven by the need to protect workers' rights and lift people out of poverty. This agreement represents a victory for the NEHAWU MUT team that has been involved in these negotiations".

Nzama said the number of converted staff was likely to increase. "We have workers who are paid on an hourly basis that we would like to see converted as well. Those that have been converted so far are the three categories, viz, contract workers with all the benefits; contract workers without benefits; and contract workers for whom positions need to be created."

To secure this victory, NEHAWU drew on developments in the labour sector that took place between 2014 and 2015, coupled with the guiding philosophy of 'work of equal pay, work of equal value'. Nzama said there were workers who had been on contract since 2008. He said that according to labour regulations, any worker who has been on contract for three months or more should be converted to a permanent position with benefits, or employers should cease their employ and offer them a severance package.

Elaborating on the benefits for the workers, Nzama said: "These workers can now sleep well at night. They can now raise loans with banks to improve their lives, over and above the benefits they will get from the University. They have been sitting on the edge for too long. Among the benefits they will now enjoy will be contributions towards their pensions. Remember that the working life of any worker in this country is 18-65 years. There are workers who have not been accumulating the pension benefit for years. Now their lives have changed." Nzama added that these workers' productivity levels are likely to improve as they will be more focused now. A direct gain for the employer!

Nhlakanipho Mzobe and Siphamandla Ndaba are two staff members who can now look forward to a more settled life. Both are administrative assistants in

the Department of Human Resources and Development and have been contract workers in the department since September 2014. "I can now make realistic plans for my life. Next year I will register to study since I can now access the study grant. I will also include my children in the medical aid scheme I will now be joining," said Siphamandla. Nhlakanipho said he has peace of mind now that his job is secure. Now he will start contributing to his pension, which he said was "a major one for me".

Nomusa Mkhwanazi, the Head of the Campus Wellness Centre, said stability makes one less stressed and less anxious, and enables individuals to perform to their optimum ability. "You are more at ease when you know you have a future with the company. You motivation improves, and your performance is likely to improve. You think that 'I am one of them, I am with them.' You enjoy the benefits," she said. She added that non-permanence leads to worry about the end of the contract. "But if you are full-time you know your value and contribution are appreciated."

Shop steward Linda Nzama points out that NEHAWU is a partner of University management and conducts its business with the University in terms of a recognition agreement signed in 2009. The focus is on looking after the interests of workers in a way that is mutually beneficial. "For instance, as a full-time shop steward, it is my duty to make sure that workers do not embark on an illegal strike. This way management benefits." Also, he said, the union provides a structured way to negotiate with management. This prevents workers from consulting with management individually, which would be very cumbersome for all parties.

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 DIPLOMA: ANALYTICAL CHEMISTRY
 DIPLOMA: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
 DIPLOMA: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
 DIPLOMA: NATURE CONSERVATION
 DIPLOMA: COMMUNITY EXTENSION

BSC: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

SUBJECTS REQUIRED:
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 Life Sciences

MANAGEMENT SCIENCES



DIPLOMA: ACCOUNTING
 DIPLOMA: COST & MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING
 DIPLOMA: PUBLIC FINANCE & ACCOUNTING
 DIPLOMA: HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
 DIPLOMA: MARKETING
 DIPLOMA: OFFICE MANAGEMENT & TECHNOLOGY
 DIPLOMA: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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