



100 DAYS IN OFFICE

Dr Enoch Duma Malaza

Preamble

What brings a high-energy theoretical physicist and a double Ivy League scholar to lead a University of Technology situated in one of South Africa's biggest townships, Umlazi in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal?

Dr Duma Malaza studied for his terminal degrees at Brown University, a private Ivy League research university in the United States, as well as at the University of Cambridge in England, a collegiate public research university which is ranked number five in the QS World University Rankings 2018.

Back in South Africa, he embarked on an academic career and was recognised as a promising young researcher by the National Research Foundation (NRF). His leadership abilities soon saw him excelling in academic leadership - and it is in this role that he has made his most enduring mark. His academic leadership career includes directorships in institutional planning and quality assurance at the universities of Cape Town, Pretoria and KwaZulu-Natal, and being CEO of Higher Education South Africa (now Universities South Africa).

His association with various prestigious and strategic organisations over the years includes being a member of the board of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, the International Association of Universities and the South African Technology Network, as well as being a member of Council for the UbuntuNet Alliance for Research and Education Networking.

To return to the question of what brings him to MUT, the answer is simple: he believes in the future of MUT and is on a quest to make MUT a university that South Africans will want to be a part of. But he is not here to do it alone. "I would like to reassure you that I come to MUT as a humble servant. The purpose of my being here is to work with you, so that together we can create an envisioned future for MUT - something concrete, vivid, visible and real," he says.

Dr Malaza's big plans for MUT include anchoring MUT within its communities. "Our being here is a strategic advantage. I want to be a part of this MUT that should change the lives of our people. The 4th Industrial Revolution must not disadvantage the MUT students, staff and the people of Umlazi. This is the discourse that as MUT, we need to drive. I have begun a long conversation with our staff on how we could 'shape and own the future'; and this conversation is appealing to all our constituencies".

UP CLOSE WITH DR MALAZA IN THE FIRST 100 DAYS



During his first three months in office, Dr Malaza made a point of not only studying every statutory document he could in order to understand what MUT is all about, but speaking face-to-face with its stakeholders. During his engagements with over 400 staff members and the Student Parliament, they have developed a picture of him that includes simplicity, a preference for clean spaces, having a work space 'like home', innovation, a strong community orientation, a passion for sustainability in everything, and above all, a commitment to delivery.

Some of these aspirations he hopes will soon be embraced by the MUT community and will be embedded in our mission, vision, values, goals and themes as we walk with him in fulfilling the MUT 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.



Is this vision too bold? Not so, it seems, as staff pour their hearts out and commit to walk with him. In his 100 days in office, he has been highly visible, pragmatically optimistic, action oriented, and willing to listen to others' views as he tackles his first challenge of "sorting out governance issues". He listens and takes notes during his two-hour sessions with staff from different departments, regardless of their rank. Sometimes hard questions are thrown back at him, but he still smiles and takes the conversation back to the core discussions. One philosophy he displays is for people to find solutions and this has been characterised by probing questions he asks, such as 'what do you think needs to be done to get there'. Often this surprises people but makes them think hard and produce incredible solutions.

A picture of a transformational leader is beginning to take shape, whose style is to work with teams to identify the change that is needed, create a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and execute the change in tandem with committed members of a group.

He has also placed strong emphasis on servant leadership, a phrase coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in his 1970 essay, "The Servant as a Leader." To the university community, regardless of rank, Dr Malaza says: "Become a servant first, focus on the needs of others, especially team members, before you consider your own."