

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS AND ISSUES MANAGEMENT

From the outside, many organisations look normal until a new leader arrives, and then crises seem to criss-cross from one corner to the other. How does an organisation deal with unexpected crises? Does it strive to get its 'old self' back so that it can return to business as usual? This may sound like the easiest and most logical thing to do - but not so for Dr Malaza, whose approach is to "sort out governance issues" so that the MUT can first be stabilised and renewed. This is the foundation of securing a bright future for MUT.

"My approach is that we should not carnival in humiliating others. Let us find ways to engage and empower each other and learn from those mistakes," Dr Malaza has said. This approach speaks to the engagement and empowerment-driven approach that he is discussing as part of the MUT values that the institution needs to aspire to.

Within Dr Malaza's first 100 days, task teams are already delivering results as they tackle various crises and issues. Close-out reports have been submitted and corrective action is underway where due.

Following the death of Zolile Khumalo, one of the key issues that the VC has had to deal with is safety and security at the student residences, both on the MUT campus and beyond its borders. Consultation with his executive management team has resulted in a number of resolutions:

- To get an expert opinion instead of relying on our own assessment. The timeline agreed on was less than a month, and an assessment report was successfully completed and presented to the EMC.
- To take corrective action through requiring the landlords of the external residences to improve security measures. There have been some improvements but Dr Malaza is pushing for standardisation across the board.
- To develop a project plan to maintain safety and security across the residences. This has been completed.

Conflict management is another thorny issue that is being tackled. Dr Malaza's view is that it should be done in a transparent and principled manner.

VC addresses media on the passing of Zolile Khumalo



STRATEGY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

This is at the core of Dr Enoch Duma Malaza's skill set. He is passionate about the role of strategy development and it has been his forte for years. He believes that the MUT Strategy 2020-2025 must be formulated from the outset with all our people, regardless of rank, gender, race or stature. Everyone who belongs to the MUT community must give us input on where they want us to take MUT. Strategy must be driven by the aspirations of the staff and we need to distance ourselves from the past, he believes. The consultative process began with all levels of management, support services staff, academic support, researchers, academics, maintenance and cleaning staff. Thereafter, the focus will be on listening to stakeholders such as MUT alumni, government, business, the fourth estate and the diplomatic corps.

Discussions with more than 400 staff members have taken place face-to-face, online (via an online survey), and through formal discussions during "Coffee with the VC" meetings.

The "Coffee with the VC" campaign has been the driver of the VC Strategy meetings. He works the room, as they say: he talks to everyone and people just share information. They are happy to meet their leader, they tell him.



VC and some of the University's researchers

These are some of the most touching messages that he has heard to date:

"We love our University. We do not want to see it destroyed. After we are gone, we don't want to hear that there was once a University. Please help us preserve it."

"We are humbled to see ourselves discussing the future of this University and even drinking coffee/tea with the Vice-Chancellor. We are happy to have our voices heard."

Dr Malaza's assurance is consistent and principled throughout, regardless of the stakeholder grouping. "[Our strategy] is to have a robust discussion and scrutinise the academic agenda, embrace the challenge of diversity and find a common ground."

There is a positive discourse that is taking shape in the midst of these presentations:

- MUT's strengths are becoming visible.
- MUT's weaknesses are getting immediate attention.
- Clean spaces are popping up and slow turnaround times are being brought under the spotlight. This speaks to Dr Malaza's commitment to delivery, which is mentioned in the preamble.



VC and the leadership of both NEHAWU and Tenusa



MUT gardens are kept clean by dedicated staff

- "Shape and own the future" is becoming the new buzz word. Will it be the new action-oriented strapline for MUT? What does this mean for the ordinary employee?
- New MUT values - The DEEDS. Will these values inspire everyone to wake up and come to work and deliver (no pun intended) on them?

100 days is done, Dr Malaza's timelines are still intact. The University wishes Dr Enoch Duma Malaza well in the plans he has shared with the University and the input the University has provided.

Unwele olude Dr Malaza.