

# From the desk of the Editor-in-Chief, Mbali Mkhize

If there is an awareness that this publication needs to raise as we commence the new year, it is that 'no man is an island'. Many songs, movies, stories and poems have been written around this idea, which is also at the heart of ubuntu. Indeed, we are all in this life together, and success lies in understanding the power of collaboration.

Even the MUT Strategy 2025 makes no bones about working together. Collaboration is embedded throughout the strategy which sits on the bedrock of our values (otherwise known as DEEDS), which are: Deliver. Empower. Engage. Discover. Sustain. It would be impossible to deliver on these values if everyone just did their own thing in their little corner.

For example, MarComms, the Institute of Rural Development and Community Engagement (IRDCE) and the Office of the Vice-Chancellor have "targeting national and international engagement" as one of their key deliverables. This overlaps with the mandate of the faculties, meaning that our offices have to play a role in helping the faculties achieve their mandate. I could mention various other areas where we will see more collaboration across various disciplines, support services, academics and the executive function. Driven by increasingly healthy relationships within the campus, something big is shaping up at MUT, and will bring many islands together in a big sea. The MUT Strategy 2025 is not only inward-looking. It also provides a national and international perspective on how we can partner beyond MUT. Vice-Chancellor & Principal Dr Enoch Duma Malaza has spoken about MUT's "anchor strategy" at every public opportunity and is slowly integrating this strategy within the culture of MUT. For instance, he has challenged us to activate our DEEDS by posing questions of how we are making inroads into assimilating with Umlazi Township.



Mbali Mkhize

The Circle of Excellence awards, covered in this publication, gave the VC an opportunity to see what is currently underway as far as empowering and engaging our people from Umlazi is concerned. However, much remains to be done to revitalise the township. Community participation in the university still needs a boost and new ideas are being mooted. The bigger vision is for MUT not to be an "island" separating itself from the sea of the Umlazi Township, but to be firmly anchored in the township to empower its people.

On that note, 2019 has already begun with a bang! At the first session of the MUT Senate, our deans delivered landmark reports which provided a new perspective on what the faculties are doing. Between these and the stories in this publication, there is plenty of good news to sustain the momentous delivery that is starting to happen at MUT.

# Message from the Vice-Chancellor

In our Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 we have articulated a vision to be

“a transforming, equitable, sustainable and academically excellent University of Technology anchored in its communities”.

This Vision is an expression of a commitment to:

- Grow in academic stature
- Be fair and inclusive
- Grow in harmony with our resources
- Grow together with our communities.

I have commenced a strategic journey to use every available platform to share this vision and I urge you to do the same, so that all our stakeholders may understand the journey we are embarking on.

One of the cornerstones of Strategy 2025 is to immerse ourselves with Umlazi Township through our Anchor Strategy. We have begun to strengthen existing collaborations and to find new partners that will help us realise our goal of being an "anchor institution". An anchor institution is an urban institution with significant infrastructure in a specific community that is therefore unlikely to move. In MUT's case the Anchor Strategy brings together "town" and "gown" for their mutual benefit.



Dr Malaza, MUT Vice-Chancellor & Principal

We will be activating our **Anchor Strategy** during the course of the year. Currently, local high schools are already receiving tangible benefits from MUT. I was heartened to observe during the Circle of Excellence Awards that MUT has, over the past five consecutive years, managed to recognise excellence in a range of schools (top performing schools, emerging winners and those succeeding despite significant obstacles) and to reward them with useful resources for further development. This power to harness better resources for our neighbours fits in with the values we have set for ourselves, namely:

- **DISCOVER** new ways of working with our people so that they are ready for the challenges of the fourth industrial revolution;
- **ENGAGE** our local communities regardless of their standing in Umlazi;
- **EMPOWER** our local communities;
- **DELIVER** a strategy that will speak to the vision we have for these communities; and
- **SUSTAIN** existing programmes that we have embarked on, and those we intend embarking on.

We should all commit to supporting local schools in producing learners who will be outstanding in their studies and will go on to study further, hopefully with us. As a University, we are considered a keystone for the establishment of a meritocratic society in which social justice is entrenched.

