

ENGAGE

This is how we build our nation...one rainbow at a time



Taking the unity message to the streets of Umlazi

For MUT, nation-building isn't just an imperative in the 2030 National Development Plan. Nation-building is the lifeblood of the institution, starting with the community on its doorstep and the community within its gates.

Dr Enoch Duma Malaza, MUT Vice-Chancellor & Principal, regularly reminds the University community of its strategic advantage as articulated in the MUT Strategy 2025: "Being a residential university, largely serving previously disadvantaged communities with opportunities to educate and empower our students and communities and address the pressing transformation and multicultural issues facing the nation". He has also stated that "we want to develop global citizens" and that the University will become known for being non-discriminatory.

It is for this reason that MarComms, in collaboration with Student Affairs, is creating several nation-building projects for and with students in order to create a vibrant, inclusive campus. On 27 March, the University celebrated Human Rights Day with its own Rainbow Day - a dazzling and colourful event where over 500 students marched about five kilometres from the main campus gate to ComTech and then to Seme Hall. They were dressed in rainbow outfits and sprayed in rainbow colours, all in an effort to make a statement that "We are a rainbow nation. We don't see the 'other'. We celebrate diversity, the LGBTIQ and equality for all". The consistent message throughout was,

"It does not matter what your background is, what your life choices are or what beliefs you have; you can be a successful individual".

Gugu Ntinga's unforgettable day



Gugu Ntinga leading the charge against intolerance

The popular quote - "It's not about what you said or what you did, it's about how you made people feel" - captures what Gugu Ntinga, a third-year Office Technology student living with albinism, felt at MUT during the Rainbow Day celebrations. Her self-esteem was boosted, and she wasn't the only one who benefited. Third-year Marketing students Sizani Dube and Londiwe Dina both said, "We felt respected, recognised as similar to the other students and unhindered". There were many LGBTIQ students who expressed how they felt welcome. Co-MC Luyanda Mchunu, another third-year Marketing student from Montclair, was touched that people like him are welcome at MUT.

Creating a vibrant campus



The march ended with a relaxing picnic at the University sport grounds

Student life is all about living the life to the fullest. Students want the vibes: they want a vibrant campus, they want to relax a bit, and they want to belong to an active community that supports their development and prepares them for academic, personal and professional success.

The Generation X contingent at MarComms is of the view that 2019 is the year that MUT must change and become more student-centred. This awareness has resulted in MarComms leading several campaigns over the last few weeks to help make students' stay more enjoyable, create a positive vibe and pre-empt potential dangers.

These include:

- Anti-scamming student campaign
- Hug Your Heart Campaign
- Cyber-crime campaign
- Corporate Identity Campaign
- Rainbow Day
- Chillas Tuesday

- a concept that has been making waves in MUT student life. Chillas Tuesday will be held during the weekly Forum Period and students will get a chance to get together and create their own entertainment.

US Consul-General visits MUT for the first time

On 12 March 2019, Dr Enoch Duma Malaza and his executive management team welcomed the US Consul-General, Sherry Zalika Sykes, and her Public Affairs Officer Felix Salazar (also known as Jabu, who speaks perfect Zulu). In her opening remarks, Sherry outlined current funding programmes and noted that MUT was not featuring in any collaborative activities with her office.



MUT VC, right, with Sherry Zalika Sykes

"Universities are important institutions within every society. They have a responsibility to advance society. It is for this reason that every investment that we are making, is made through universities. For example, MUT needs to participate in the PEPFAR and Fulbright programmes. I want to make the most of my 18 months left here in Durban, and looking at where MUT is based, I would feel good after my term to know that we have touched a university in Umlazi Township as well," she said.

Dr Malaza shared a vision of how the Consul-General could also consider assisting the University to enhance the exposure of its students in student leadership. Prof Marcus Ramogale, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, added that "we would like to see our students look at entrepreneurship as a means to generate their own income instead of waiting for employment opportunities".

The conversation will be taken forward with the US Consul-General and a training session will be held in the near future.