

EMPOWER

MUT makes the circle (of excellence) bigger

MUT's Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Enoch Duma Malaza, could not contain his emotion at his first Circle of Excellence Awards ceremony since his arrival at MUT. The annual event, which was held on 15 March this year, aims to encourage Umlazi Township high schools to improve their Grade 12 results by recognising those that excelled, and requesting them to partner with those that are not doing as well. "Our view is that education should be the centre of life. We have seen over the years how countries of the world conquered every obstacle with education. The quality of education is the measure of any country's success. Umlazi schools are our neighbours. Investing in their education is worth the effort," said Zama Sishi, Director of Stakeholder Relations Management at MUT.



Menzi High Deputy Principal, Nosipho Mnguni, middle, with Dr Malaza, left, and Mr Nhlanihla Shandu, CES-Circuit Manager, Phumelela Circuit

High school mathematics is regarded as one of the most difficult subjects to learn. In spite of this, some schools did exceptionally well. The school that walked away with the first position in Maths was KwaMathanda High School, from Umlazi's BB section, which achieved 100% pass rate in Maths. The school's Chief Education Specialist (CES), Busi Mahlambi, said teaching and excellence in Mathematics ought to be replicated with other subjects. She also acknowledged the need for well-performing schools to help struggling ones. Second place went to Menzi High, with a 92% pass rate, and third went to Dloko High School (77%).

As has now become the norm, Malibongwe Khumalo, a Menzi High School teacher, continued to lead his grade 12 learners to stardom in Physical Science. Menzi High achieved a 100% pass rate in Physics, ahead of Sishosonke High School and Dloko High School, who were placed second and third respectively. All schools achieved a 100% pass rate, but their positions were determined by the number of learners that wrote.

Umlazi schools did very well in English. Nine schools achieved a 100% pass rate in the subject. These were Enaleni High School, KwaMgaga High School, Menzi High School, Mafumbuka High School, Mason Lincoln School, Shumayela High School, Velabahleke High School, Zwellibanzi High School and Vukuzakhe High School. Each English FAL educator received a Woolworths voucher for R500, sponsored by Gem Schoolwear. Their schools received a certificate and 10 dictionaries sponsored by Iqraa Trust.

For the next 12 months the Mason Lincoln Special School, a newcomer, will be wearing the badge of being the "Most Improved School". The school received a certificate, 10 dictionaries and a R2000 Makro voucher. The school scored 100% pass in English and their overall results improved from 33.33% in 2017 to an impressive 67% in 2018. The principal of the school, Busisive Shoba-Morolong, said the awards were a motivation for them "to do even better".



Principal of Makhumbuzi High, Bonginkosi Dlomo, receiving a certificate from sponsors and MUT Management and Education department official

Celebrating the impact of the Circle of Excellence Awards

The Circle of Excellence Awards have made schools become more intentional in improving pass rates. Competing with 28 high schools for a coveted place in the 'circle of excellence', Umlazi principals are working hard to make a difference in their schools.

It is indeed surreal that schools with bare-minimum resources are able to produce a 100% pass rate and secure top positions in mathematics and science. Even one with a single matric class of over 500 learners still managed to attain a 87% pass rate! That would be more than five schools in some private colleges who yearly attain 100% and charge up to R250,000 per annum. Yet, there is a no-fee school that succeeds so overwhelmingly.

The efforts of MUT to add to this great improvement cannot be understated. Sourcing wide-ranging sponsors for the Circle of Excellence awards has had a significant impact on teaching and learning in Umlazi schools. Over years, schools have won mobile laboratories, laboratory consumables, mobile libraries and laptops - all in an effort to ensure that they are well-resourced for success.

.....A year later, nine schools attain a 100% pass in English Language



From left, Dr Malaza, Nomusa Shamase, Circuit Manager, and Nhlanihla Shandu, CES-Circuit Manager, both at Phumelela Circuit



From left, Elet CEO, Nareshini Ranganthan, Dr Malaza, and Dr Baker

The adage, "It takes a village to raise a child" has lived up to its expectations. This year was the first year in the history of the Circle of Excellence awards that nine schools managed to achieve a 100% pass rate in matric English Language. The investment by Elet at the beginning of 2018 shows that English teaching in Umlazi can indeed be improved with the right support.

"In next year's Circle of Excellence awards, this pass rate should grow higher and we will continue measuring the Return on Investment," said Nareshini Ranganthan, CEO, Elet.

MUT's Vice-Chancellor, Dr Enoch Duma Malaza, has tirelessly spoken of the Anchor Strategy which seeks to ensure MUT throws its might behind the marginalised, the downtrodden and people on the periphery to truly empower Umlazi Township. This is a classic example of how anchoring MUT in Umlazi will bring benefits to every stakeholder within it.



Umlazi District Leadership with MUT Management

Dr Malaza informed school principals, sponsors, learners and MUT staff that working with Umlazi as a whole, was part of the University's 2025 Strategic Plan. "With our Anchor Strategy, which is part of the 2025 Strategic Plan, I want to see MUT being at the forefront of revitalising Umlazi Township. Umlazi Township is known for producing great industry leaders such as Sizwe Nkasana, Sandile Zungu, the Mxenges, Peter-Paul Ngwenya, who owns Igagasi FM, and many more," said Dr Malaza. The VC stressed that he would like to see industry leaders assuming an active role in working with the schools and MUT to rebuild the township's youth ambitions. He added that learners needed to be given the correct information about what universities could do for them so they did not see them as welfare states.

The day's main attraction was the awards. This year the top performances in English were added to the traditional categories of Accounting, Mathematics and Physics. "English is the bedrock of almost every form of learning and communication in South Africa, with all due respect to the other languages," said Zama. Leading the top three Accounting schools was Menzi High School, with a 100% pass rate. Since the inception of the CoE six years ago, Menzi High School has received an award every year for being among the top three schools in Accounting. Behind Menzi were Zwellibanzi High School and Embizweni High who both achieved 92.31%, achieving second and third place respectively. They both received a Makro voucher of R1000, while Menzi received a R2000 voucher.