

**Zolisa Gqamane, deputy registrar, academic**

Mr Zolisa Gqamane is encouraged to wake up every morning and use his knowledge to contribute towards changing MUT for the better.



Dr Malaza, left, welcomes Gqamane

"The key focus areas our unit is to ensure that our processes are clearly guided by rules, regulations and policies. If our processes are clearly guided by the above aspects, it is going to be easy for us to identify and attend to gaps and challenges being faced by our units. Since we will compare our approved policies with our present practise which should talk to each other. Currently, we have just embarked on the benchmarking exercise which will ensure that we have the required and compliant rules, regulations and policies. We will not relax up until we are convinced that all our processes and their systems are seamless, user friendly and guided by policies. Our processes include, selection and admissions, registration, examinations and graduations".

He wants to ensure that every unit has its own policies developed and updated, in order to enforce compliance to MUT rules, regulations and policies. He would also like to implement a client-centred approach in as far as delivering our services to our clients. He is a Christian who prays for his family, relatives and his colleagues. He is here to contribute towards improving MUT and the quality of our graduates. His family is his pillar of strength; especially his wife and his kids.

**Another DST recognition for Dr Njabulo Gumede**

Dr Njabulo Gumede's attainment of his PhD in 2016 was not the end of his research journey. Two months later, he was awarded a R150,000 grant from SAB for his cancer research. This was immediately followed by a R1 million grant from the South African Medical Research Council. For this grant he collaborated with international researchers from the US, Spain, Dr Marcelo Bravo his mentor and CEO of Oxford Pharmascience PLC, as well as Prof Krishna Bisetty from DUT.

In March this year, he has yet again received an award from NIPMO in conjunction with the Department of Science and Technology (DST). "The award is mainly for the two patents that we lodged in the past four years. We started with one provisional patent in 2015. Then in 2016 we lodged a Patent Cooperative Treaty (PCT). This patent was protected globally during that time and was lodged in the Australian International patent office. The patents were resubmitted and the International search report (ISR), together with the Written Opinions (WO) rendered the claims as innovative, inventive and with industrial applicability," said Dr Gumede.

The two patents were further revised and underwent examination by the international patent office. All these stages took place in 2017 with the assistance of Moore Patent Attorneys and Dr Mienie's office. The two PCTs were published by the international patent office in April 2017. Then in 2018, the two PCTs were lodged in the national phases i.e. in RSA, USA, EU and Canada. The patents will be granted in these different due restrictions in 2020/21.

"The NIPMO and DST is now acknowledging and rewarding our efforts as we have reached a milestone that was not reached before. It is rare for a first patent to be rendered as innovative, inventive and with industrial applicability in due restrictions with stringent protocols like the US and the EU regions", said Dr Gumede.



Dr Njabulo Gumede

# Faculty of Natural Sciences

## Faculty of Natural Sciences on a new high

Prof Alfred Msomi, acting dean in the Faculty of Natural Sciences, speaks with passion when asked about his faculty. Just before the end of the year, a number of his faculty colleagues attained postgraduate degrees, and the 2018 MUT annual report attests to both the faculty's increased research output and its many national and international engagements.



Prof Alfred Msomi

"The Faculty of Natural Sciences is set to do even better. We are going to put plans in place to improve our research capacity and we will request our senior research staff, like Prof Roger Cooposamy and Prof Akash Anandraj, to run workshops on research for our staff. We want to grow our own timber. This may lead students from other institutions to approach our senior staff for supervision for their senior degrees. I am going to propose that their current workload be modified to accommodate the added responsibilities," said Prof Msomi. Prof Cooposamy, who has supervised and graduated students from other institutions, has already indicated that he is ready to take up the challenge.

**Growth in the attainment of terminal degrees at the Faculty of Natural Sciences**

- nGap Junior Lecturer Ms SI Nkosi completed a Master of Nature Conservation degree cum laude in December 2018.
- Mrs T Zikhathile completed an MSc in Environmental Science in October 2018.
- Mr SC Gumede completed an MSc degree summa cum laude in December 2018.
- Mr JJ Msane and Ms Z Sibaya obtained MSc degrees in Information Systems.
- Ms NP Ndlovu obtained an MSc in Food and Nutrition.
- Mr EN Mtshali achieved "Expert Level Instructor" with Cisco.
- A group of IT students was placed third in the National Hackathon.
- Ms NX Mkhize was awarded a Nuffic Fellowship Programme to attend a course on "Food security in an urbanising society" at the Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, in the Netherlands in September 2018.
- Ms TR Kunene was awarded a Master's degree in Agricultural Extension & Rural Resource Management (MAgric AERRM) by UKZN in April 2018. Ms Kunene was also awarded a certificate from Wits Business School in Fundamentals of Project Management.

**Dr Vuledzani Nico Ndou, an up-and-coming researcher in Natural Sciences**

Dr Ndou completed his Doctor of Philosophy in Plant breeding (Biotechnology) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in just three years. His research focused on conducting a genetic analysis of maize hybrids derived from temperate by tropical germplasm under low and high plant population density.



Dr Ndou

As a member of the Community Extension department at MUT, he is now focusing on boosting his research capacity in order to impart relevant knowledge and skills to students as required by the agriculture industry. "My professional mission with MUT is to improve the skills and knowledge of students in my department, and I intend to achieve this by working to reform the student mentality towards hard-to-improve knowledge, so that no students under my supervision leave the university without a knowledge content of their chosen careers. I will work hard to do my part," he says.

He has recently received a PhD Supervision certificate from Stellenbosch University and was also awarded an NRF grant for a teaching assistant, which will assist him to manage his teaching workload and pursue research, community engagement projects and other career growth and development activities.

**Nature Conservation dominates MUT's 2018 accredited journal submissions**

When MUT submitted its list of DHET-accredited journal submissions for auditing in 2018, the Department of Nature Conservation emerged as the top contributor. Out of 68 articles published by MUT staff in DHET-approved journals in 2018, 14 were by staff members of the Department of Nature Conservation. This constitutes 20.6% of the total articles published.



Leading the pack! From left, Prof Georgina Arthur, Prof Cooposamy, and Prof Small

The department head, Prof Peter Small, said it was his team's dedication that ensured their success. "Over the years our department has been leading in all three aspects of university life - research, teaching and community engagement. We took a decision that we would focus on these areas, and work as a team. Our department has the least turnover, and the biggest number of professors. We believe in ourselves and what we are doing," said Prof Small. He added that collegiality was central to the way staff members conduct their work, and that they worked extra hours so the department could achieve its aims.

Associate Professor, Roger Cooposamy, agreed that their main strategy was working together as a team. "We collaborate and work as a family in our department. Also, we keep moving the bar to the next notch for ourselves. This year we aim to publish more," said Prof Cooposamy, one of the serial award winners in the department.