

Meet Mr and Miss MUT

The exciting Miss and Mr MUT Beauty Pageant took place on 8 September 2018 at Seme Hall. The event was organised by ELM Vuvuzela and its purpose was to select the winners of the title for 2018. The event also provided an opportunity for students to interact with each other, promoting social cohesion.

The Seme Hall, usually used for graduations and examinations, was transformed into a smart, sophisticated venue for the Mr and Ms MUT hopefuls to walk the aisle with confidence. The stage, sound and lighting resembled the setting one sees on TV for national beauty pageants. A new stage was installed in the opposite direction to provide a unique setting for the event.

The programme directors for the event were Hope Mbhele of Igagasi FM and SK Khoza of a soapie called The Queen. They kept the audience captivated. The main artists for the pageant were Madanon and DJ Bhoonu. Several local artists, including MUT students, also performed during the event. The swimwear competition took place first, followed by casual wear and finally elegant evening wear. Thereafter, the top six contestants were announced. The final test involved a question and answer competition.

The event was described by Mthoko Ntuli, Student Development Officer at MUT, as:

“ecstatic, theatrical and out of this world.”

The contestants looked great in their attire which was chosen to suit the evening's theme of 'Moral Regeneration'.

This theme was intended to instil a sense of pride among students. Even their outfits were sponsored". The Student Affairs Department was humbled by the Vice-Chancellor's attendance.

Wendy Ndlela was crowned Miss MUT of 2018. She is an S3 Electrical Engineering student. The first princess is Banele Mkhwanazi, a first-year Marketing student and the second princess is a third-year Marketing student, Felicity Dladla.

Siphokuhle Moyane was crowned Mr MUT 2018. He is a second-year Public Management student. The first prince is Thandanani Dubazane, a first-year Marketing student and the second prince is Muntuwenkosi Mathe, a first-year Public Management student.

Student Affairs kept to the University's No-Alcohol Policy, even during the after party which started after 11pm and continued until the early hours of the next morning. DJs and artists such as Malum Kool Kat, Khuzani, DJ Bongz, DJ Sox and many others, entertained over 3500 students.

Stringent measures were taken to ensure the smooth running of both the pageant and after party event. The security control system was tightened by Sandile Security at the main gate and the perimeter fence around the campus, while the perimeter of the Seme Hall and the rugby sports ground were also monitored. The gate behind Seme Hall was opened and manned by Sandile Security in order to grant easy access to the VIPs.

Both events went well, with very few hiccups. The following morning, 9 September 2018, exhausted yet high-spirited students were transported back to their residences.



Mr and Miss MUT, Siph Moyana and Wendy Ndlela

Families keep our ambassadors' feet firmly on the ground

Over the years MUT has elected student that glow with aura as Miss and Mr MUT. The year 2018 was not an exception. Two down-to-earth students Wendy Ndlela and Siph Moyana came through the gruelling process and were crowned as ambassadors of the University. Wendy, (21) a KwaMashu lass doing S4 towards her Electrical Engineering diploma, is a graduate from MUT's immediate neighbour school, Umlazi Comprehensive Technical School, (Comtech). Wendy said she always yearned to take part in a beauty pageant, but has always been busy with her school work. She spotted the gap in 2018, prepared for the competition, and her name was called last among the three winners - second princess, first princess, and Queen! "I went to gym a lot, and changed my diet. I began eating vegetables and fruit. I watched relevant material online like the walks, and the style and set-ups where contestants were interviewed," Wendy said. Wendy advised the youth to "go for your dreams, don't let people drag you down. Some were saying I was not going to make it. But I did," said Wendy, whose father is a pastor, and mother is an engineer. Wendy has a four year old brother, Emihle, whom she adores. She added that she got good grounding from her parents and grandmother, whom she visits at KwaMhlabuyalingana, in the far north of the KwaZulu-Natal. Wendy intends to take modelling as a career, and also help other girls who have the same ideas.

Like Wendy, Siph credits his big family for the kind of person that he is. The second year Public Management soccer player is from Ndumo, Jozini, north of KwaZulu-Natal, has four brother and three sisters. He went to Ndumo High school in the area. Being chosen the winner was a natural step forward for Siph. "I have done modelling and acting for a couple of time. This is a career to me. In 2017 I was second prince. That did not stop me from trying again. I believe in four Ps - preparations prevent poor performance. I started preparing for the contest in March." Siph went to the gym everyday. He stuck to his diet regime. He said playing soccer also helped a lot.

Siph said he hoped winning the Mr MUT crown would open the entertainment doors for him. Gaining a foothold in the business will give me a chance to contribute to the development of the community. I really would like to focus on rural youth. They need education-related information, mostly. Ndumo will be my springboard," he said. Siph's love for the community stems from his love for his family, who he said "means everything to me. Especially my mother. I love her a lot. She taught me the importance of the power of prayer. His family was originally from Mtubatuba in the north of the province. His father passed away when Siph was very young. Siph said his friends, who are much older than him, played a big role in shaping his character.

EMPOWERED ADMINISTRATORS CONFERENCE

EAC Founder pours her heart out

"I could not take even a short walk to the woods to clear my head after the hectic two days of the Empowered Administrators Conference (EAC) that took place on 20-21 September 2018 at Durban's Waterfront Hotel. The annual two days of the EAC are a culmination of a year of planning, which involves numerous meetings in my department and visits to many places where we discuss the EAC. These are our recruitment drives.

I am penning this letter to pay special tribute to special people, the delegates and also my team - they are the best! This September we had more than 150 delegates and exhibitors from all over the country - from the corporate world, education, private and government sectors.

First, just a few words as to why I founded the EAC. In South Africa we have Secretaries' Day on which we all thank the secretaries for what they do for our organisations. I felt that that was not enough as office administrators need to be continually empowered with relevant information. This is the reason we focus on a new topic each year, unless delegates request repeats of certain sections.

The EAC provides opportunities to change people's lives and directly contributes to the economies of the world. We started off by taking our office administrators to Jozini Tiger Lodge in Northern KwaZulu-Natal in 2011. Then in 2012 we had a "proper" conference with international delegates, which marked the official birth of the EAC - and it became an international gathering from 2012. This bears testimony to the skill of my team that has planned and executed various strategies year after year. The EAC gets better and better, as some of the delegates have pointed out, thanks to the creativity of the team and suggestions from delegates. The first-out-of-the-trenches attitude of the core members of the organising team is directly responsible for the success of the EAC.

I am always touched by the presence of our sponsors and exhibitors. These partners, some of whom have been with us for a number of years, give a "business vibe" to the conference. Kgabo Phaka of Tsogo Sun, a loyal sponsor of the EAC, says they would not miss this event for anything! Van Schaik Bookstores have also been a constant sight at the MUT events. At times they have donated prizes, as did the Hilton Hotel and Old Mutual at the 2017 EAC. Thank you and well done, friends!

Another great source of joy for me is the quality of my colleagues' leadership, creativity and selflessness in ensuring the success of the EAC. My heart just melts! I get the feeling that my colleagues are not just working, but living the EAC philosophy of caring, being accessible, sharing, inspiring, being inspired and just being nice to others!



Delegates at the 2018 EAC

I confess that I will never know the full impact which EAC has made upon the delegates and their organisations. However, year after year, we receive testimonies from delegates telling us how the EAC has transformed them and their places of work. During one of the sessions, we recognised six "EAC family members" or EAC alumni who have attained Master's qualifications. This is a clear indication that delegates have been encouraged by the EAC to "think outside the box". Talk about empowerment!

Planning for any conference is difficult, and the EAC is no exception. Challenges we have to face every year include conceptualising a conference theme that will resonate with skills development officers, as they are the ones that approve conference attendance. This is not easy as we have to start from scratch each year, but it empowers us to carry out our research diligently, without any cutting and pasting!

There have been a number of spinoffs for MUT from the EAC. Whether it's the increase in number of delegates, diversified attendance or sponsorships, nothing beats the corporate social responsibility that the EAC has incited among delegates. Because the EAC is all about empowerment, the delegates have also learnt to empower others.

I would like to say a few words about the people that have heeded our call to contribute towards social upliftment. In 2016, I asked delegates to donate sanitary towels as we had been made aware of the dire need for these essentials. It was disconcerting to hear that young students would miss an entire week of lectures because they could not afford sanitary towels.

The delegates' response was amazing! Large boxes of sanitary towels were pushed into the venue, with the DoE's Nokulunga Nkabinde and MUT's Ronelle Govender taking the lead. The same individuals did it in 2017 with teddy bears to soothe the hearts of the abused children at Bobbi Bear Foundation. In 2018, delegates donated jerseys for the children of Umlazi Place of Safety. Giving is an opportunity to uplift another person's life. It is an investment for the future. This is what drives us in the department, and clearly, the EAC delegates as well. Please accept my grateful thanks to you all for donating and being a part of the EAC." Mballi Mkhize