

MUT Graduation 2018

An impressive 2,338 students graduated from MUT in April 2018, a slight increase from the 2,296 graduates in 2017. Of this group, 33 students received their qualification cum laude. For the first time in the 39-year history of MUT's graduation ceremonies, over 10,000 parents and family members of graduates attended various ceremonies at MUT over a five-day period. For some it was their first visit to the place where the dreams of their loved ones have been nurtured and brought to fruition.

One of the first African electrical engineers is honoured in her hometown

Contrary to the Biblical allusion to "no prophet [being] accepted in his own country", MUT recognised Ms Nelisiwe Barbara Magubane by dedicating not one but two graduation ceremonies held by the Faculty of Engineering in her honour. This is the highest accolade that MUT can give, recognising an individual's excellence and showcasing high achievements in order to encourage graduands to emulate that excellence. Nelisiwe is the Chairperson of Matleng Energy Solutions and a champion of women's development in the energy sector in South Africa. Most notably, she is one of the first African females registered as an electrical engineer, and she also has a Postgraduate Diploma in Business Administration. "Our faculty chose Nelisiwe on these strengths, coupled with her illustrious career. We want to see our graduates emulating this outstanding achievement by thinking big and beyond SA, which is what Nelisiwe did with her extensive engagement in the Southern African power sector. Her engagements included negotiations with the government of Mozambique on the Cahora Bassa power system, the government of Portugal, the Grand Inga Treaty with the governments of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Republics of Angola, Namibia and Botswana, to name a few," said the Acting Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Julia Baah.



Ms Nelisiwe Magubane receiving a fellowship certificate from Mr Gona Govender, Acting DVC: Teaching and Learning

One noteworthy feature of Nelisiwe's career is the rate of her vertical progression. After starting her career at Eskom, she later moved on to become a consulting engineer in the private sector. She then accepted a government position as the chief director responsible for the restructuring of the electricity sector, planning and implementing the electrification programme. Her subsequent appointment as Deputy Director-General gave her the responsibility of developing the policies that govern electricity, nuclear and clean energy in South Africa. She was appointed as Director-General of Energy in December 2009. Among other things, Nelisiwe was responsible for the development of the Integrated Resource Plan, which targeted improved access to electricity for over a million households within four years. She has recently been nominated by the Academy of Science in South Africa to participate in a study to assess energy efficiency technology in our country.



The first Nature Conservation Masters graduates with Prof Small (middle) and Prof Marcus Ramogale, Acting VC & Principal (left)

MUT honours its first Master's in Nature Conservation graduates

The lives of Fundile Ndlela, Mthombeni Albert Ndlangisa, Seshego Seabelo, Siphog Goge, Andile Christopher Dlamini and Pheladi Petunia Chuene will never be the same again. They are the first cohort of students to receive the first Master's degree in Nature Conservation in the country. This is indeed a first for a university of technology and sets a precedent for the rest of the country. These pioneers graduated on Thursday, 19 April from the Faculty of Natural Sciences at Mangosuthu University of Technology.

The six graduates have all secured managerial positions at various national parks and environmental affairs departments across South Africa. Petunia Chuene, who is employed by the Department of Economic Development in Limpopo as a Field Ranger, made this comment at her graduation: "This is the commencement of a new chapter in my life. I can never go back. It's been my dream to have an ultimate qualification in my field and the end is near". She was accompanied by four of her family members, all the way from Limpopo.

MUT arranged a special event for these Master's pioneers after making history for MUT and for the country. Accolades go to Professor Peter Small, head of the Department of Nature Conservation, which is already accredited with a number of post-graduate qualifications. So far, the Master's is the top of the mountain for a department that is well-known for its leadership and efficiency.

In response to the accolades heaped upon him and his department, Professor Small said that he still had further aspirations. "My dream is to have a doctorate being offered by our department. We are very close, just a couple of signatures left! We want our department to provide all relevant qualifications and components right up to doctoral level." Professor Small thanked his dedicated colleagues for their input and MUT management for its support. He said that Professor Marcus Ramogale, the Acting Vice-Chancellor, had bought into the idea some years ago. Professors Small and Ramogale both thanked the students for showing faith in MUT. Some of them had studied for their formative qualifications at other institutions, but had decided to travel long distances to enrol at MUT for the Master's degree.

It is also important to thank two other academics for their meritorious contribution to the students' success. Professor Murugas Roger Cooposamy supervised the research, co-assisted by Professor Gavin MacDonald, and their hard work is most appreciated.