



Mangosuthu
University of Technology

SPIRIT



35

Celebrating 35 years as a new era begins

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The core purpose of MUT is to contribute to the advancement of vocation-based education and training that will enhance the country's skills and competitiveness for the development of humanity.

Celebrating 35 years as a new era university

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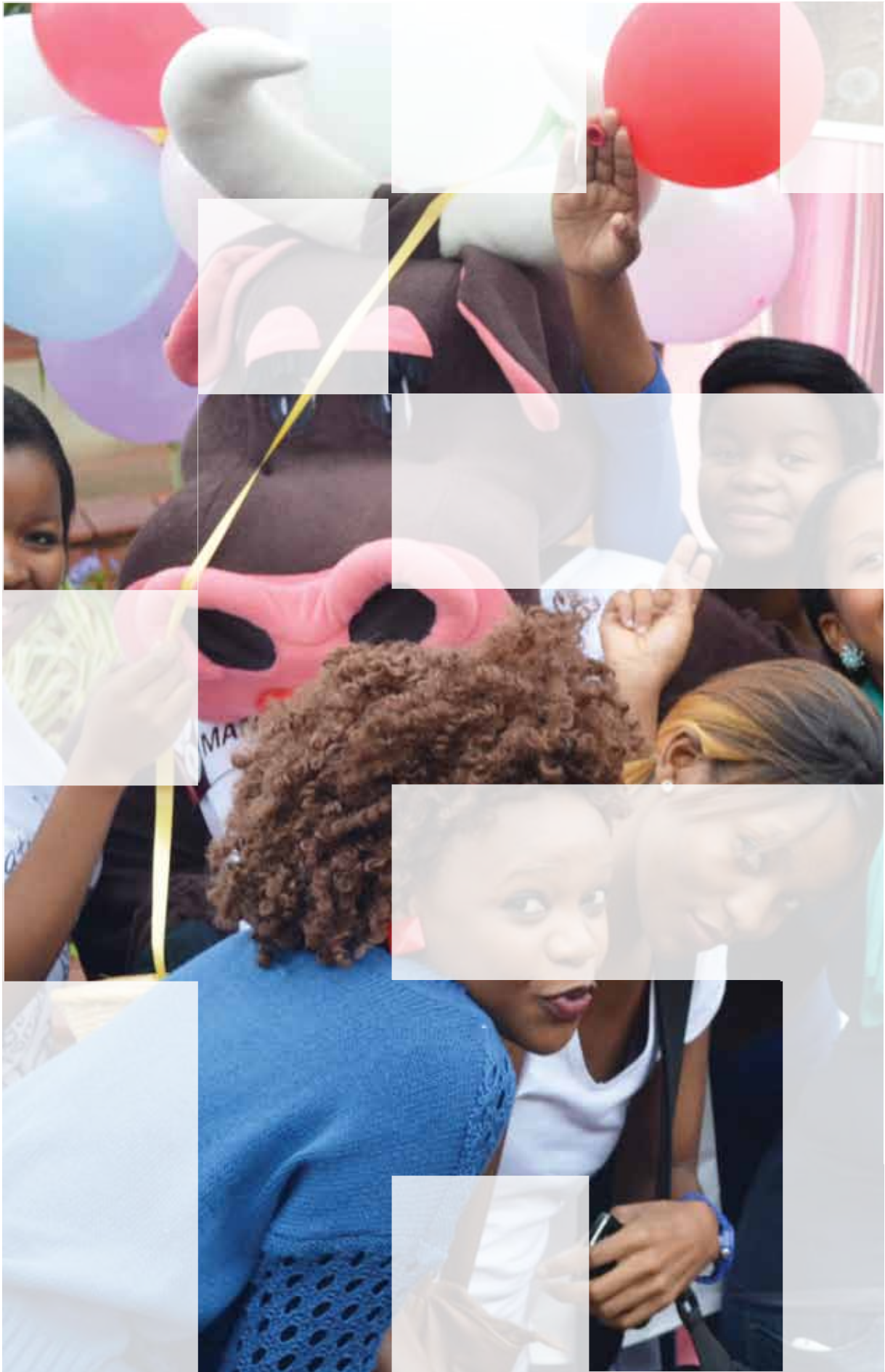
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Mbali Mkhize, Senior Director, Marketing and Communications

It is very heartening to see the strategic direction MUT has taken in terms of its brand positioning. The last quarter of 2014 saw external stakeholders enjoying various MUT brand experiences through interacting with the brand at conferences, seminars and workshops.

During this time, MUT was responsible for a number of international conferences and world-class seminars, workshops and events. These included the award-winning international Empowered Administrators Conference (EAC), organised by the MUT Marketing and Communications Unit; the From STEM to STEAM Conference, conceptualised and convened by the MUT Faculty of Engineering; and the South African Technology Network (SATN) Conference, hosted by MUT in October 2014.

All these events are covered in detail in this issue of Spirit, and demonstrate the university's ability to work with external stakeholders in bringing about successful conferences, and the ability of our academics and students to work together in hosting productive workshops and seminars.

These are signs of a brand reaching maturity. MUT has grown not only as a brand, but also as a conference destination. Its image has been elevated.

Watching dignitaries from across South Africa and the globe descend on MUT not once but three times within one quarter was phenomenal. Brand MUT's credibility has been confirmed, and we salute the architects of this incredible brand – the entire MUT community, from all ranks and file. This community has truly brought to life MUT's brand promise, 'in pursuit of excellence', creating positive national and international brand perceptions.

The relationships forged during this period were also noteworthy. Top organisations in the form of sponsors and exhibitors supported our efforts to host these events, and we thank them for this vote of confidence.

MUT has also continued its brand leadership strategy of valuing its stakeholders. Our Department of Student Affairs, for example, has created its own social cohesion conferences with student leaders, and we acknowledge the successful and seamless student elections that were a direct result of its countless engagements on this issue.

Great brands shape the agendas in their fields by enabling stakeholders to experience their brand value, resulting in positive brand perceptions. I believe that through these successful events, MUT went a long way to achieving that this year.

TWO VICE - CHANCELLORS SHARE INSIGHTS INTO THE UOTS VALUE PROPOSITION

PROSPECTING FOR SEEDS OF INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN UOTS

Many have characterised South Africa as a country reeling from poverty, inequality and unemployment. Indeed, the South African government, not least President Zuma, has emblazoned the national psyche with the haunting image of the so-called triple challenges.

We argue that these scourges are essentially corollaries of the same thing: an unstable and a weakening economy. Many commentators have argued as much. Further, we believe that innovation and entrepreneurship oriented education can help us to grow a more sustainable economy and in turn, produce more sustainable jobs.

Towards more innovative entrepreneurs

Sustainable jobs are not created by money, but by people through their innovation and entrepreneurship. Presuming the commonplace meaning of these two concepts, we wish to marry them. On the one hand, this country is replete with excellent research that does not lead to innovation and sustainable livelihoods. On the other, it is replete with entrepreneurs that bring no sustainable innovation to the table; hence the marriage.

A general antidote held up to South Africa's current economic predicament is that if our economy could be more robust, the number and quality of jobs should nominally improve. This would deal with not just unemployment, but improved job categories as well.

Granted, there would more likely still be residual inequality. But, such would be from a higher threshold on average, which should expectedly lift many from abject poverty. At least this is the simplified version of the aggregate economic growth model.

The traditional mission of universities has been to educate for employment by others rather than educating to innovate and, through entrepreneurship, eventually employ others. When faced with an examination and criticism of their presumed value, universities have historically tended to claim that their role ends with education and the impartation of knowledge.

Anything beyond that would thus be seen as a bonus. For example, when graduates are able to create self-employment, this has often been by default and not necessarily by creative design.

Positive progress at UoTs

Universities of Technology (UoTs) in South Africa, in terms of their primary mandate, are supposed to focus on what is readily applicable in the workplace, by producing graduates who are work ready. In this context, these institutions have been called upon to strengthen their provisioning of work integrated learning Work Intergrated Learning (WIL), through which students are given an opportunity to experience first-hand the workplace as part of embedding their classroom learning.

In this regard UoTs, under the umbrella of the South African Technology Network (SATN), have collectively worked to create a common conceptual understanding and to clarify the educational role of Work Integrated Learning (WIL). Importantly, this conceptual work, which has immensely galvanised the energies of UoTs, has been done in collaboration with other stakeholders including the Council on Higher Education (CHE). The national Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) also recently established a directorate to manage WIL.

The overall progress UoTs are making in increasing WIL placements and improving the educational efficacy thereof represents a welcome step forward. For one thing, this should generally strengthen the employment prospects of our graduates. In turn it is hoped this shift will positively impact the general economy as we improve the work readiness of the average graduate and by extension, the productivity potential in the economy. The latter, it must be said, has been fingered as one of the bugbears of the South African economy to date.

We argue that while improving the WIL outcomes is a necessary and even long overdue step for UoTs, it should nonetheless not be seen as the ultimate destination in the current era. Rather, it should be seen as a route to other destinations.



Professor Mashupye Kgaphola, Professor Thandwa Mthembu

Professor Mashupye Kgaphola, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Mangosuthu University of Technology and Professor Thandwa Mthembu, Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Technology.

A case for reorienting university education

The tectonic changes that have occurred in the world economy have long dispensed with the notion that all our graduates, whatever their formal training, will be absorbed by some labour- and graduate-hungry large corporations and the civil service. Across the globe, economies have struggled to produce enough jobs to absorb graduates.

Admittedly, university teaching, learning, research and innovation methodologies have not changed significantly to get us to produce graduates whose focus is to acquire education and knowledge with a different paradigm. In a sense, we still produce graduates for yesterday's world, either out of ignorance or, to paraphrase William Bridges, a dogged belief that the 'good times' will return.

In the modern economy, education must be used as a basis for creating something new by way of artefacts, services, products, ideas, processes, applications etc. These are all elements that constitute innovation. Further, education must (re)orientate graduates to be both agents and interpreters of change. In turn, this should enable graduates to become adept at recognising work opportunities that arise out of such changes, as outlined by renowned US management consultant, educator and author, Peter Drucker, in his exposition of the essential attributes of an entrepreneur.

In a nutshell, we believe our universities of technology in particular must redirect their educational offerings towards deliberately cultivating a culture and ethos of innovation and entrepreneurship across all modules and programmes. This call is made against the backdrop of ample international studies and models that show a positive correlation between innovation and entrepreneurship on the one hand, and economic prosperity on the other hand.

The call for a substantial reorientation of the learning programmes at UoTs must be tempered with consideration for the resources and emotional ramifications this entails. Such an exercise would inevitably take some time, but it should not be forsaken for that

reason. It would be best to start at a manageable scale and level, so as not to be tripped by our enthusiasm.

The ultimate change we envision here goes beyond some of the existing intervention models, but would likely incorporate aspects of these as building blocks, for example, elective modules on entrepreneurship that are popular in business/management studies, short add-on modules offered to engineering students etc. It is our view that a sustainable version of such programmes requires not just the so-called entrepreneurship skills and opportunism, but a scientific or innovation base from which to launch entrepreneurship.

As things stand, UoTs are in many respects grappling with how to effectively capitalise on their resourceful people and networks. The new approach would thus include, for example, leveraging partnerships with academic entrepreneurs (entrepreneurs with an affinity for academe) and the work of entrepreneurial academics (academics in UoTs who are not shy to engage with industry). Students attached to such programmes would surely have an inside track on the real world on work and business.

The call made here should, however, not be seen as a presumption that South Africa's wider challenges in education and the economy would be solved through a silver bullet. We are nonetheless convinced of the urgency to shift from where we are now standing as universities and as a nation.

Professor Mashupye Kgaphola is Vice-Chancellor of Mangosuthu University of Technology, and current Chairperson of the South Africa Technology Network (SATN – www.satn.co.za).

Professor Thandwa Mthembu is Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Technology, and immediate past Chairperson of the SATN.

Both authors write in their personal capacities.



“I am stunned at this ability to transform our graduates into skilled workers,” Professor Kgaphola told guests at the event.

Ms Zwane (left) and Professor Kgaphola, putting pen on paper

MUT AND ITHALA DEVELOPEMENT FINANCE CORPORATION SIGN LANDMARK MOU

Two giant Umlazi institutions, MUT and Ithala Development Finance Corporation, formalised their relationship recently with the signing of a landmark memorandum of understanding (MoU).

“You are not just good neighbours, but strong partners, and we have been with you when you celebrated your milestones,” Ithala Group Chief Executive, Yvonne Zwane, told guests of the two parties’ relationship that began in 2012 when Ithala staff attended MUT’s Empowered Administrators Conference (EAC). “EAC has become a key event; we see it as an innovative programme that is truly putting KwaZulu-Natal on the map.”

Yvonne further commended MUT Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mashupye Kgaphola, for leading an institution that produces youth who could function ethically and creatively in society. “As Ithala, we are at the centre of knowledge management and empowering the youth to be creative. Knowledge management has been something we have been unable to package, and it is one of the areas MUT can consider,” she added.

The highlights of the day were testimonials by MUT students who had been working as interns at Ithala for the past nine months. They spoke about how they had matured and grown professionally at Ithala, and delivered their addresses with the eloquence of adults who had been in the field for years. One of the students, Thembekile Ntshangase has been retained as an ICT Security officer.

“Having listened to our students who have been working at Ithala as interns, I believe we are making a difference. It is wonderful that we are able to formalise this relationship today. As MUT, we are here to pay homage to the contribution Ithala is making towards our strategic vision and the goals of South Africa. I am stunned at this ability to transform our graduates into skilled workers,” Professor Kgaphola told guests at the event.

The vice-chancellor added that he was delighted that a small initiative like the EAC had become part of the provincial and national calendar of events. “MUT has put a very ambitious plan on the map; we have challenged ourselves and challenged our students to rise with us. This plan can only be realised with

the support of partners. We are determined to make MUT an expression of excellence,” he said.

Ithala seeks to collaborate with stakeholders in the areas of entrepreneur development, financial literacy, social upliftment and training. As such MUT and Ithala’s MoU aims to:

- Bring on board all levels of management in the strategic leadership discourse in order to develop leaders of tomorrow;
- Look at strategic corporate neighbours for expertise so they may provide new perspectives on leadership;
- Look into other potential initiatives that address empowerment issues in all spheres of business ; and
- Include a knowledge management component as in data curation that will assist Ithala in fulfilling its strategic objective.

“This relationship is important to us. One of the challenges facing graduates today is a lack of experiential training. Ithala therefore seeks to forge strategic alliances with like-minded organisations such as MUT in order to play a more meaningful role in providing opportunities for learners and graduates to benefit from continuous learning and skills development programmes,” Yvonne said.

Both leaders agreed the MUT-Ithala partnership was necessary for students to complete their study journeys. “If our students didn’t get work integrated learning from business organisations like Ithala, there would be a definite gap in their learning,” Professor Kgaphola explained.

Yvonne added that Ithala was a “great university for the young and old” because it had a reservoir of knowledge that the MUT interns were able to tap into as and when they needed.

There’s no doubt these two neighbours – Ithala also located in Umlazi’s V section, just a stone’s throw from MUT – that collectively aim to develop South African society through education, have become solid partners in their quest.

SA TECHNOLOGY NETWORK (SATN) CONFERENCE



MUT BREAKS NEW GROUND DURING THE SATN CONFERENCE

Yet again, MUT showed its niche skills in conferencing when it hosted the seventh South African Technology Network (SATN) Conference from 14 to 16 October 2014, at the Fairmont Zimbali Resort on the KwaZulu-Natal North Coast.

An aspirant for world-class conferencing, MUT understands the power of conferencing as a highly effective marketing and communications tool. So it was that MUT's branding, media relations management and social media strategies were showcased at the fore of the SATN conference.

"When I arrived at Fairmont Zimbali on the eve of the SATN conference, I knew I had arrived at MUT away from campus," chuckled Professor Marcus Ramogale, MUT Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic, at the immense MUT branding erected at Zimbali.

The bold branding was the first indication that MUT as conference host was doing things a little differently this year; that it was pulling out all the stops to ensure a successful event, and venturing into territories not previously explored.

For example, the media were invited to attend the conference long in advance, and they came in their numbers. There were at least 12 media houses covering the conference, with the publicity generated being valued at more than R350 000 and reaching more than four million people through the print, broadcast and digital media channels.

MUT also took the SATN Conference to a higher level this year through the social media platforms Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. The university's marketing and communications team played a critical role in creating an interactive platform through social media and online competitions. "We had to build SATN's

online presence to reaffirm its technology mandate among techno-savvy delegates," says Mbali Mkhize, Senior Director, Marketing and Communications, who adds regular web updates on conference proceedings were also hosted on www.mut.ac.za

Over and above this, the MUT academics who presented papers at the conference further brought the MUT brand to life through their knowledgeable addresses that were favourably received.

Also given the thumbs up was the ground-breaking roundtable discussion, initiated by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor who is also SATN Chair, Professor Mashupye Kgaphola. This 'out the box' initiative was a first for SATN, and provided a space for industry to engage all South Africa's universities of technology and the Polytechnic of Namibia. About 40 business leaders met with the six vice-chancellors who were present as part of the discussion.





UOTS, LOCAL BUSINESS LEADERS AGREE ON FUTURE COLLABORATION

Delegates and leaders at the conference

The South African Technology Network (SATN) used its seventh annual conference to host its first-ever roundtable discussion with local business leaders. Represented by all the vice-chancellors from SA's six universities of technology (UoTs) and that of the Polytechnic of Namibia, SATN unveiled its strategy that puts industry at the core of its value chain. Industry was represented at the forum by more than 40 business leaders from KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.

"As we were engaging business for the first time as SATN, we used the opportunity to inform business leaders of our objective to identify appropriate partners in every area. We also explained our plan to adopt a single activity as a pilot project through which we aim to develop our relationship with business, and based on these outcomes, formalise it through MoUs and further collaborative initiatives," says Professor Mashupye Kgaphola, Chairperson of SATN and MUT Vice-Chancellor.

Industry applauded the ground-breaking meeting. Such collective thinking, most delegates agreed, helped them see the bigger picture as to where UoTs were headed, as opposed to industry contributing to ad hoc CSI efforts all over the country that sometimes did not deliver the expected benefits. "We would like to spend our money better to create meaning. We would like to add to your strategy of how we can groom production-ready graduates," said a Toyota representative.

Farzanah Mall, Chairperson of the KZN Chapter of SA Women in Business, believed the discussion was a critical starting point to what could become a meaningful relationship. "We are so rich in talent but lack facilitated conversations. There is also a lack of trust resulting in limited collective thinking, and as such real needs are not addressed, despite the wonderful work universities do," she said.

Collaboration was the buzzword of the meeting. "Once UoTs and industry collaborate, they can start tackling SA's challenges

together and address industry's emerging needs such as the green economy and digitisation, and even go back to the incubation model that has somewhat been cast off the agenda by many industries," echoed a Durban Chamber of Commerce delegate.

Another dominant focus was on entrepreneurship, with a stern reminder that while entrepreneurship should be encouraged, people still needed to be educated, given access to education and be mentored.

Professor Kgaphola was satisfied with the inaugural meeting, saying he felt it was on the right track and the next step would be to take the engagement to a deeper level.

Professor Kgaphola (left) and Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr. Blade Nzimande addressing the media



2014 SATN CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Professor Mashupye Kgaphola, SATN Chair



In closing the 2014 SATN Conference, Professor Mashupye Kgaphola in his joint capacities as SATN Chair and MUT Vice-Chancellor reflected on the areas that had been discussed over the three conference days.

Among the most important were how SATN was going to deal with business and industry when it came to student placement for work integrated learning (WIL), and how it would gather industry input in order to make teaching programmes more relevant. It had been noted that programmes had to be in line with general economy needs in order to be relevant.

Another interesting fact that emerged from the conference was that in European countries, business invested a lot of funds in training students on the job. This was hardly the case in South Africa, where most of the funds were poured into student training by the government through the SETAs. Universities of technology, delegates agreed, must form a committee to engage business to see more funds invested into on-the-job training.

The Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, was guest speaker at the conference and said, among other things, that universities of technology should partner with TVETs to ensure their programmes were streamlined.

Natural Sciences CAB makes an impact at SATN Conference

The Centre for Algal Biotechnology (CAB) poster exhibition at the SATN conference, held from 14 to 16 October 2014, showcased the cutting edge research done at the centre. The posters attracted the attention of the delegates and created an awareness of the biofuel research conducted at MUT. The various forms of microalgae were displayed for the delegates to view and gain a better understanding and visualisation of what microalgae is. The research into biohydrogen production displayed on one of the posters was demonstrated on a small scale at the exhibition table. Crude microalgal oil and biodiesel samples were also displayed with the poster explaining the intricate steps of biodiesel production.

Numerous discussions with national and international delegates took place, with some even resulting in a potential student considering pursuing his postgraduate studies under the supervision and mentorship of the CAB.

Overall it was a great three days, where knowledge was shared and networking and partnerships were initiated.

MUT academics shine

A number of MUT academics participated in the conference, doing the university proud. Out of the 34 papers presented, 18 were delivered by MUT academics, all focusing on improving

teaching and learning, which was a key theme of the conference.

In separate papers, Dr Pius Owolawi, MUT Head of Department of Electrical Engineering, and two Vaal University of Technology (VUT) academics, Leon Grobbelaar and Johan Jurrius, looked at using technology to enhance teaching and learning. They spoke of virtual classrooms and virtual universities, and how these online entities could alleviate pressure on government resources. Students with Internet access would have the flexibility to listen to lectures anywhere.

Richard Chidzonga, a Senior Lecturer in MUT's Department of Electrical Engineering, highlighted how Bloom's Taxonomy could be used to improve teaching and learning, while Mphathi Ndlovu, Acting Head of the Department of Marketing, shared a paper on students' experiences and perceived relevance of being placed in different working environments.

Another MUT academic, Pradesh 'PK' Ramdeyal, Acting Head of the Department of Information and Technology, in his presentation, argued strongly for universities of technology to have post-graduate programmes so they don't lag behind other types of universities. This would go a long way to closing the skills gap, he said.

A definite highlight for MUT was the leadership shown by Professor Senzo Malinga, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, who assisted colleagues Richard Chidzonga and first-time speaker Cebo Nyondo in preparing their papers. Cebo says he really enjoyed working with Professor Malinga in compiling his paper, Enhancing the learning environment to promote student success: an MUT case study. Although Cebo said he felt intimidated by the calibre of the presenters with whom he shared the stage, he held his own.

High-profile local academics share knowledge

One of the presenters who may have intimidated Cebo was Professor Lourens van Staden, a man who has been in the academic environment for more than 30 years. Professor van Staden, a Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), argued that university councils and management had to create environments that enabled teaching and learning.

Most of the papers delivered sought to highlight long-term solutions to current educational challenges. One such paper was that presented by TUT Dr Caroline Selepe. She and her team are putting together a good practice database of tried and tested teaching and learning solutions. They would like to partner with staff at other universities to build this database and make it accessible to all. They aim to post it onto TUT's website early next year, and say there are academics who are already benefiting from the data collected so far.



MarComms team

Empowered Administrators Conference (EAC)

CREATING THOUGHT LEADERS IN OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

On a bright and sunny Thursday, 11 September 2014, a confident MUT marketing and communications (Marcomms) team staged yet another fantastic Empowered Administrators Conference (EAC) for office administrators over two days at the Maharani Hotel in Durban.

The conference was attended by 197 delegates from higher education institutions, parastatals, all spheres of government and the private sector. The Marcomms team was a picture of professionalism throughout the conference, demonstrating enthusiasm, confidence and great leadership (despite feeling the fatigue and stress of planning and staging such a significant event).

"The Marcomms team is responsible for everything. We do not have a huge budget to hire event organisers, so we do everything from scratch ourselves," says Mbali Mkhize, MUT Senior Director, Marketing and Communications, and EAC Founder.

EAC planning starts with identifying a conference theme, followed by the development of the two-day conference programme, which is based on the needs of the previous year's delegate evaluation. This then takes EAC leaders, Mbali Mkhize, Zama Sishi, Jay Roopsunker and Lisa Mbongwa, on a long

journey of EAC research and development.

Added to this, the conference has to 'sell' itself, and as such the value proposition must be relevant. "At R4 500 per delegate for conference registration, the EAC has to be excellent," says the Marcomms team. Even new staff members were soon swept away by the EAC tidal wave and on board with the programme. Len Mzimela and Jade Kunene introduced the phrase 'rocking it' during planning and soon all conference delegates had to 'rock it'.

Apart from increased registration numbers, in 2014 the EAC continued to draw increased sponsorships, conference exhibitors, media coverage and new organisations sending new delegates. The event was once again successful in broadening MUT's stature, and attracting new strategic partners for MUT. These elements enhance the sustainability of this growing event.



INAUGURAL EAC AWARDS HELD



EAC 3 – EAC inaugural awards

A major highlight of this year's conference was the EAC awards, introduced to recognise the sterling work of those office executives who go above and beyond their mandate to provide excellent customer service, who continually elevate and demonstrate their respective organisations' brand promises, and who set themselves apart through presenting authentic personal brands.

The awards categories included the EAC Customer-Centric Award, the EAC Brand Ambassador Award and the EAC Ubuntu Award. All these categories resonated well with the conference tracks, which were aligned to appreciative enquiry, positive thinking and emotional intelligence.

Setting the tone, Dr Pius Owolawi, Head of the Electrical Engineering Department at MUT, applauded the EAC for providing a rare opportunity for office administrators to listen to different schools of thought on how they could become dynamic leaders within their respective areas of specialisation.

Defining the role of these unsung heroes, Wits University

academic, Professor Koffi Kouakou said, "Office administrators are seen as the engines that keep organisations running and are positioned in an environment where their behaviour is contagious; a positive attitude towards work will radiate positively around the office. Any good story that is told very well is likely to touch the hearts and minds of people. EAC awards are a way of telling good stories about office administrators".

EAC Customer-Centric Award winners

The proud EAC Customer-Centric Award winner, Lebo Maroane, Executive PA to the MD of City Power in Johannesburg, described being nominated for and winning the award as her reason for waking up every morning and doing what she does. "This award means I am making a difference in someone's life, in my own life and also contributing to the bigger picture of my organisation. The EAC is an empowering and enriching experience that recognises our efforts in being the face of, and assets to, our organisations," she said.

Zoliswa Ludidi, Senior Secretary to the Registrar at Mangosuthu University of Technology was awarded second place in this category, and Kershni Dhavraj of the Durban University of Technology, third place.

EAC Brand Ambassador Award winners

Philisiwe Cele, Executive PA to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Technology Innovation and Partnerships at Durban University of Technology, was awarded the overall EAC Brand Ambassador Award.

Anusha Karamchand, Departmental Secretary for Community Health studies also at Durban University of Technology and a loyal supporter of the EAC who hasn't missed a single conference yet, was awarded second place in this category, followed by Sindisiwe Hlongwane, Senior Secretary in the Department of Legal Services at Mangosuthu University of Technology.

EAC Ubuntu Award winners

The EAC Ubuntu Award is a special category designed to recognise individuals who embody empathy and are in possession of unique skills to defuse conflict.

The Ubuntu Award was won by Nonkululeko Hadebe, Audit Administrator at Ithala Development Finance Corporation.

Mapule Skhosana, Senior Secretary for the Department of Institutional Planning and Research at Mangosuthu University of Technology was placed second, and Nokuthula Bavu, Executive Administrator for the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Mangosuthu University of Technology, was placed third.

These empowered administrators represent the true values and objectives of the EAC, which aims to create thought leaders and unleash the true potential of office executives.



Philisiwe Cele from DUT



Vuyo Mthethwa with Nonkululeko Hadebe



Lebo Maroane

THE EAC AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME

Because of budgetary constraints, the EAC relies heavily on word of mouth marketing. MUT markets the conference to its stakeholders, and then urges them to recruit EAC delegates from within their networks.

This year a R2 000 voucher was made available as a prize for the most active recruitment EAC Ambassador, which was awarded to Phindile Sandi from the University of Zululand.

Loyal supporter

Speaking of ambassadors, another proud EAC ambassador is Shobna Persadh, Corporate Affairs Manager for South African Breweries: East Coast Region. She is an ardent supporter of the EAC and has a vast understanding of marketing and communications in both higher education (DUT and MUT) and

the corporate sector. She has received numerous awards in this field, which has taken her as far as UCLA and Spelman College, Atlanta, in the USA to further enhance her skills.

Apart from being an ongoing supporter of the EAC, Shobna was also a speaker at the conference this year. She lists her greatest achievement as her state of inner peace and contentment. Her amazing husband, three wonderful children and parents are core to her state of being and remain her priority, notwithstanding a demanding work environment.

Shobna is the regional custodian of SAB's regulatory and legislative agenda, and manages corporate reputation, licensing, communication, corporate social investment, sustainable development and enterprise development issues. This world-class global company has broadened her experience, sending her to international partners in, among others, Budapest in Europe, Bogota, Colombia in South America and most recently, London in the United Kingdom. She served as the first chairperson of the R2b SAB Employee Share Scheme Trust and is currently a trustee on the SAB Provident Fund Board.



Wimbush, Des, and Gradwell – Coming full circle, the first MUT academics!

MUT'S FIRST ACADEMICS COME FULL CIRCLE

In July 1979, John Wimbush, Des Mack and Gavin Gradwell – three men who are still very much connected to MUT in different ways – set foot for the first time ever in Umlazi township as the first lecturers in the university's Department of Electrical Engineering.

"At the time you needed at least 10 years' industrial experience and higher education experience. Contrary to what we had read in the newspapers about the 1976 riots, we found a group of students eager to learn and hungry for knowledge. Our first group was a success. Some went to work for Phillips in Singapore and for Mondi," reflects John Wimbush.

John and Gavin retired in 2007. However, being the great academics they are, they were soon recalled as part-time lecturers.

The two were more than happy to oblige and continued to add value to MUT. Today John and Gavin are special advisers in the department.

Most recently the duo was part of a high-level team that sought to ensure the department still offered industry-relevant programmes, and provided invaluable support to the department's strategic plan.

Des Mack is now a Director of MUT's Department of Co-operative Education. He and Professor Koos Landman are the university's longest serving staff members whose tenures of service have never been broken.

SECOND CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS GET BIGGER AND BETTER!

MUT's Marketing and Communications Unit continued its conferencing excellence when it hosted its second Circle of Excellence Awards (CoE) at the Hilton Hotel in Durban on Friday, 5 September 2014.



The Circle of Excellence

The awards were attended by 150 people, including school principals, deputy principals, subject educators, subject advisors, circuit managers, district directors, MUT executive members, MUT council representatives, deans and members of the media.

The awards were born out of the need to tell good news

stories of township schools and high schools that deliver outstanding results against all odds, especially in Umlazi where MUT is based. A total of 30 Umlazi high schools participated in this year's CoE project.

Umlazi is South Africa's second largest township, and home to a number of dedicated teachers. These teachers deserve partners that can help them reach their targets of succeeding within challenging learning environments.

This is exactly what Marcomms' strategic role has comprised in this regard. "It's a 'charity begins at home' project that cheers the underdogs and eggs them on to maintain the tough challenge of producing good quality matriculants that can compete with the rest of the country's Grade 12s after they leave school," says Len Mzimela, MUT Director for Public Relations and Brand Management.

The CoE project focuses on the key strategic subjects of mathematics, physical science and accounting, and aims to encourage learners to take these subjects while offering supplementary tuition for those learners and educators who need it.

In Pursuit of Excellence

MUT's motto is, 'In pursuit of excellence' – a defining element reflected in all its integrated marketing activities. It's a clear brand promise on which the university can honestly deliver.

"In designing this project we looked for a brand match – a project that would allow us to actively demonstrate our brand promise while strengthening our brand stakeholder relations in the process. To this end CoE aims to connect MUT to sectors and pockets of excellence within our targeted market segment in order to help raise the profile of our brand and deliver on our mission as a university committed to '...the upliftment of talent but predominantly disadvantaged individuals'. Our brand viability is strongly linked to the continued offering of mathematics, accounting and science in high schools that are defined as our feeder schools," Len explains.

The participating schools were judged according to six categories, with each category featuring a winner and first and second place runners up. Category winners were awarded trophies, and each ranked school received a signed and framed certificate. Generous sponsors Engen, Pep and KZN Lab Equipment sponsored additional prizes for the winners.

The winners were:

- Best matric results: Menzi High School (1st), Zwelihle High School (2nd) and Velabahleke High School (3rd)
- Best mathematics results: Menzi High School (1st), Dloko High School (2nd) and Umlazi Secondary School (3rd)

- Best physical science results: Menzi High School (1st), Mziwamandla High School (2nd) and Ekwazini High School (3rd)
- Best accounting results: Menzi High School (1st) , Velabahleke High School (2nd) and Dloko High School (3rd)
- Most improved maths and physical science results: Mhawu High School (1st). Mhawu High scooped top spot, much to the delight of Professor Alfred Msomi, MUT Acting Head of the Department of Mathematical Sciences. The school's maths results jumped from just 6% in 2012 to 83% in 2013! Professor Msomi runs workshops for local maths teachers.
- Most innovative school (music): Ekwazini High School (1st), Umlazi Secondary School (2nd) and Velabahleke High School (3rd)

Each category was measured quantitatively based on the statistics offered through the Department of Education. Music is an extra-curricular activity offered by a sizeable number of schools in Umlazi. The school choirs are an important element in the shoring up of a culture of learning, and music was included in the project as a way of affirming that.

The success of the project can be measured by the presence at the awards ceremony of a mayoral representative, senior manager in the premier's office and members of the university council.

The SABC covered the event extensively and there was also a radio interview on Ukhozi FM, which has more than 7.5 million listeners.

STUDENT MATTERS

NEW STUDENT RESIDENCE SCOOPS CONSTRUCTION AWARDS

The new 640-bed students' residence currently being constructed at MUT's main campus recently won two prestigious provincial and national construction awards.

The new 640-bed students' residence currently being constructed at MUT's main campus recently won two prestigious provincial and national construction awards.

The contractor, Liviero Building, underwent a quality construction audit as per the regulations contained in the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Various construction bodies, including the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBC) and Master Builders Association of SA (MBSA), awarded Liviero trophies and even a national shield for its commitment to health and safety on the MUT site.

"It is heartening to note that the awards bear the name of Mangosuthu University of Technology. Most importantly, when we officially open the residence and hand it over to the students, we will be at peace knowing that every construction milestone was assessed by all professional bodies and the building complies with

the Occupational Health and Safety Act," said an elated Professor Khehla Ndlovu, MUT Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Resources and Planning.

Jan Stelps-Stra, Liviero Building's Safety Officer, said the team was over the moon with the outcome of the audit. "The auditors went through everything; our paperwork and the building itself!" he said, adding that safety was an engrained habit at Liviero, and not something just adhered to when an assessment or evaluation was imminent.

The construction of the residence is on time and expected to be completed during the next nine months.

Liviero - New residence construction scoops awards for each construction milestone



Double winners! MUT and Liviero officials at the site

WE TRAIN OUR LEADERS – BUILDING STUDENT LEADERS

While corporate MUT has been hosting national and international conferences, the university's Department of Student Affairs, under the leadership of the Dean of Students, Thami Mchunu, has been convening ground-breaking student summits on student leadership and social cohesiveness.

One of these, a two-day summit themed Promoting academic excellence through mission driven student leadership, was held at Amanzimtoti, south of Durban, and attended by close on 100 students.

In opening the summit, Thami elaborated on the different services offered to students by the Department of Student Affairs. He highlighted the achievements of ENACTUS MUT during the 2014 national competition as an example of the heights MUT students can reach nationally. He also emphasised the need for student leaders to strike a balance between academic activities and student leadership activities.

MUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Mashupye Kgaphola, also addressed delegates. He stressed the importance of leading by example. "Students are the co-owners of the academic project. It is important for student leaders to excel academically, which would enable them to lead by example," he said.

Different speakers were invited to discuss various sub-themes that formed the basis of the summit. These included:

- An overview of the performance of universities in South Africa, with special reference to pass rates and graduation rates at undergraduate level. This sub-theme aimed to foster an understanding of broader national issues, which included the importance of academic performance. Professor Nan Yeld, Director of Teaching and Learning Development at the Department of Higher Education and Training, made a presentation on this theme.
- Out-of-class curriculum student experience as a contributor



to overall student success and life-long learning. Eric Sebokedi from TUT, handled this theme and took student leaders through various scenarios related to the importance of the out-of-classroom curriculum.

- MUT strategic interventions and programmes for supporting academic excellence among students. Dr Manyane Makua, the Senior Director of MUT's Teaching and Learning Development Centre (TLDC), outlined academic interventions that were available to students. Dean of Students, Thami Mchunu, further defined the student support interventions that were available to students. These included exploring new ways for students to contribute towards deepening the emerging culture of academic excellence at MUT, and the reconfiguration of student life programmes in order to support the academic project of the institution.
- Raising the bar on SRC academic requirements and extending leadership academic requirements to all student leadership structures. Mosimanegape Moleme, a former national student leader, spoke to this sub-theme. He said that student leadership in universities should always aim to represent students' interests in pursuit of academic outcomes. He further explained why students should strive to excel and not just achieve the bare minimum.

"The number of student leaders who attended the conference indicated quite clearly that they valued the programme and expected to benefit from it," says Thami. "Clearly, the summit impacted immensely on student leaders and they learnt various skills that would enable them to become effective leaders in the future."



Thami Mchunu and Philani Hlatshwayo, SRC President, 2014-2015



MUT INAUGURATES ITS NEW STUDENT LEADERSHIP

2014 – 2015 SRC

On 3 October, MUT inaugurated its 2014/2015 SRC. MUT SRC elections had become 'ordinary' while other institutions had had problems. Lindo Khoza, leader of the Independent Electoral Committee (IEC), was doing a very good job grooming MUT future leaders, the vice-chancellor said, adding that MUT students had chosen differently; they had chosen a peaceful way to be part of the university's governing structure.

More lessons in leadership were given on the night by guest speaker, Mpume Langa, of ABSA. Mpume said South Africa needed high-calibre leaders who were forward-looking and workaholics. She gave examples of the Chinese and the South Koreans who did not look to their governments to create jobs, they created them themselves. "South Africans have to roll up their sleeves and knuckle down to create and grow their economy. SA needs

leaders who are firm-footed, dedicated, decisive, fair and able to distinguish between what they wanted and what they needed. Fancy things were a luxury, not a necessity," she said.

In his inaugural speech, new MUT SRC President, Philani Hlatshwayo, thanked students for having voted for the new members of the council – seven SA Students' Congress (SASCO) members, two SA Democratic Students Movement (SADESMO) members, and two independent candidates. Philani said the council was looking forward to working with university management.

Where Philani is a SASCO member, his predecessor was a SADESMO member. This seamless changing of the guard is a sign of political maturity and a commonplace phenomenon at MUT.

MISS AND MR MUT CROWNED

In what has become a cornerstone event for MUT students, the Department of Student Affairs once again hosted a highly enjoyable and incident-free Mr and Ms MUT pageant.

This was much to the delight of executive management and the department, both of which have been at the forefront of implementing the university's alcohol-free policy. Incidentally, it was this policy that many students who graduated cum laude in April this year applauded for being a mitigating factor in their more than noticeable academic success.

"On the one hand, the beauty pageant is aimed at selecting the new MUT King and MUT Queen who will take over from last year's winners, while on the other hand it aims to provide an opportunity for students to socialise with one another in a safe environment. The event positively contributes to a quality student experience," explains Dean of Students, Thami Mchunu.

The pageant was attended by more than 3500 staff and students, including those bussed in from various external residences. Well-known TV star, Melusi Yeni, MCed the event, which saw 10 male and 10 female contestants battling it out for the crown.

Ultimately, Siphosethu Thwala a third year Public Administration student, walked away with the Mr MUT title, and Philile Shozi, a first year in the same diploma, was crowned Ms MUT.



Miss and Mr MUT -Siphosethu and Philile

MUT SISTERHOOD PROGRAMME LAUNCHED

When students arrive at a university for the first time, they often feel isolated, lonely and are unsure of what is expected of them academically and socially. This can lead to newcomers feeling vulnerable and sometimes, to academic failure.

It was within this context that MUT's Student Counselling Unit (SCU) realised that an intervention programme was urgently needed. It set to work drafting a comprehensive programme for young women that it hopes will go some way to addressing these concerns. Called the Sisterhood Programme, its primary purpose is to create an environment where young women have the chance to cultivate lasting friendships, where their educational and cultural interests can be promoted, and where positive personal qualities and a true sense of social responsibility can be gently nurtured.

The programme was launched on 7 August 2014 at MUT, with around 1500 students in attendance. They listened eagerly to the motivational speakers who emphasised the importance of students taking charge of their lives by making the right choices.

Inspiring women speakers at the sisterhood launch

Among the speakers was Nomzamo Mbatha, an actress from Isibaya, a popular soapie on DSTV, and Dr Joy Ndlovu, pastor of the Durban Worship Centre and MUT council member.

Nomzamo spoke about how difficult student life was for her

as she was studying towards an LLB degree that she wasn't passionate about, and revealed how she had dropped out of varsity because of this.

She highlighted the pressure she was under with all eyes in her family on her, and the breakthrough she finally got when she landed her first acting role in Isibaya in 2013. Nomzamo told students of her passion and love for God, and concluded by stressing the importance of students following their dreams and believing in themselves.

Another speaker who touched on the power of God's love and the importance of God in a person's life was Dr Joy Ndlovu, pastor of the Durban Worship Centre – the church attended by a vast number of MUT students. She encouraged women to freely experience and enjoy university life to the fullest, but said they should still be responsible for their actions.

She tackled key issues affecting women, such as suicide (which could be related to an unplanned pregnancy), HIV infection, sugar daddy relationships and being financially deprived. All these, she said, could lead to academic failure.

Dr Ndlovu praised the Sisterhood Programme, saying that women needed more programmes like this. She also emphasised the importance of women entrepreneurs, and said more companies around the world were recognising that women were crucial to economic growth.

MUT FORGES A NEW PATH IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHS EDUCATION

South Africa's innovation levels do not correlate with its science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) graduation levels. In an attempt to address this incongruence, MUT has been engaging individuals and other institutions that share these concerns in finding potential solutions.

One of the identified causative factors for this problem is the missing link of creativity, which is a necessary condition for innovativeness in the STEM curriculum. This gap, argues Professor Senzo Malinga, the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Professor Marcus Ramogale, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic,

can only be bridged through the integration of the creative arts into the STEM Curriculum, resulting in a more holistic STEAM Curriculum.

Given that people don't think in formulae but rather visually, in pictures, there's an obvious need to embrace the arts in the teaching of the sciences. There are still massive shortcomings in the way in which science is perceived and taught at both schools and universities.

Professor Malinga and Professor Msomi



MUT as a Science Centre

The level of knowledge of science and technology in South Africa is a sore point for Professor Malinga and his colleague, Professor Alfred Msomi, Acting Head of the Department of Mathematical Sciences. So much so that the two academics have put together a long-term strategy to address the issue. Their plan involves transforming MUT into a science hub – an idea Prof. Msomi first suggested in 2011 – which would naturally have a huge bearing on the people of Umlazi, the province of KwaZulu-Natal and beyond.

At MUT's STEM to STEAM Conference, hosted from 29 to 30 September 2014, some of the centre's main goals were presented. Here Professor Msomi, Professor Malinga and other authorities argued that there was no reason that the teaching of hard sciences be separated from that of the arts. They said the STEM curriculum was not complete as it was, and had to include the arts.

Giants in the field of science like Albert Einstein and Galileo Galilei were also artists. This refutes the long-held belief that

the two sides of the human brain work independently of each other. "The right side of the brain imagines things, and the left side implements what has been imagined," says Professor Ramogale, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic.

Professor Msomi adds that there is an important need to discuss South Africa's requirements as far as the STEAM curriculum goes; principals and teachers must be made aware of the importance of science. "At the moment, learners are taught science just to pass the subject, they are not taught how it could benefit them and the rest of humanity. At basic school level, mathematics and science are not being taught with a purpose. Learners may be using a lot of technology now, but the programmes have not changed. We will flag technology as one of the most important parts of the curriculum," he explains.

Ntombikayise Sibhidla-Saphetha, KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Arts, Culture, Sport and Recreation, described the proposed creation of the MUT science centre as a revolution. The project has also garnered the support of Dr Nhlanhla Msomi, Head of the Department of Trade and Industry.

Positive impact at school level

The professors hope the centre will encourage learners to dream, and to be more innovative. They plan to establish strong links with parties that can help the centre grow. "We have already formed a core committee that will chart the way forward," explains Professor Malinga. The committee will work with, among others, the Durban Art Gallery and community development consultants, Ebukhosini Solutions.

It's anticipated that the centre would contribute to career guidance at schools. "It's very common to hear learners who have just passed matric saying they would like to register for 'any diploma in engineering'. This means they don't know anything about the diploma. What we want to see is learners being given proper direction early in their studies. After matric, it's too late," says Professor Msomi.

In an interview with the SABC, Professor Malinga pointed out that a lot still had to be done in terms of science and technology education. "Why do we still not have a single car designed in South Africa, yet more than 9 000 students graduate from our universities every year? The answer is simple, we are not innovative. But our learners and students can't be innovative if we don't create a space for them to be imaginative. We need to add the arts into the STEM curriculum," he said.

In 2015, the professors involved will organise an MUT Science Expo, where students will display their scientific and creative designs. Professors Malinga and Msomi will also lead MUT to one of the province's four new innovation and technology hubs, being overseen by Dr Clive Coetzee, General Manager for Infrastructure Management & Economic Services in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Treasury.

SHOWCASING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Passion for research in renewable energy lands Professor Zawilska international collaborations

It might come as a surprise to some that the MUT management sciences faculty rooftop houses a little research station called the Solar Thermal Applications Research Laboratory or STARlab.

Manned by the Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Professor Ewa Zawilska, the station is a state-of-the-art outdoor solar energy test and development centre, and central to the university's renewable energy initiatives.

The station reflects MUT's goals of contributing to research on saving the environment. A few years ago the university's Faculty of Engineering introduced the Greening MUT initiative, which appealed to everyone to consider using renewable energy.

Professor Zawilska has worked at MUT for 20 years, and during that time has collaborated with academics at the Durban University of Technology and, for seven years, with those at the University of Stellenbosch. Together they have researched and written a number of papers on renewable energy, with the little research station at MUT providing much of the data used.

Working with colleagues from other institutions, Professor Zawilska has published a number of papers in highly

acclaimed journals. One of these was, An assessment of the solar resource for Durban, South Africa, which she co-authored with Mike Brooks of the School of Engineering at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The paper was published in the Elsevier journal.



– Passion for research in renewable energy lands Professor Zawilska international collaborations

The collaboration produced a number of positive spinoffs: first it led to the team joining the Southern African Universities Radiometric Network (SAURAN), an initiative of the Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies at Stellenbosch University and the Group of Solar Energy Thermodynamics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. SAURAN aims to make high-resolution ground-based solar radiometric data available from stations across the southern African region.

Professor Zawilska's research has attracted the attention of the eThekweni Municipality, which aims to use some of her findings to address local air quality challenges.

A chance departure catapults Boniso to a new heights

He may have had reservations about leaving his comfort zone in the Department of Mechanical Engineering where he taught for 12 years, but Boniso Ngwenya, Technology Development Officer at MUT's Industrial Energy Efficiency Training Resources Centre (EETRC), has a new spring in his step these days. And for good reason too; the change has given Boniso room to do what he loves most – being innovative.

This is what the future demands of us all. Boniso believes that scientists like him should lead the way. He has done just that, and it has begun to pay dividends. Boniso recently secured a patent for his energy-generating turbine. "This invention relates to a system for generating power by harnessing the energy of waves passing through a body of water, in this case the ocean. The system is referred to as a wave energy converter," he explains.

As the device generates electricity without burning coal, it will greatly assist in green technology development, and contribute towards the creation of a knowledge economy. In addition, it feeds into the Faculty of Engineering's Greening MUT initiative to reduce the university's carbon footprint. "The success of this project will also contribute to creating jobs through the manufacture,

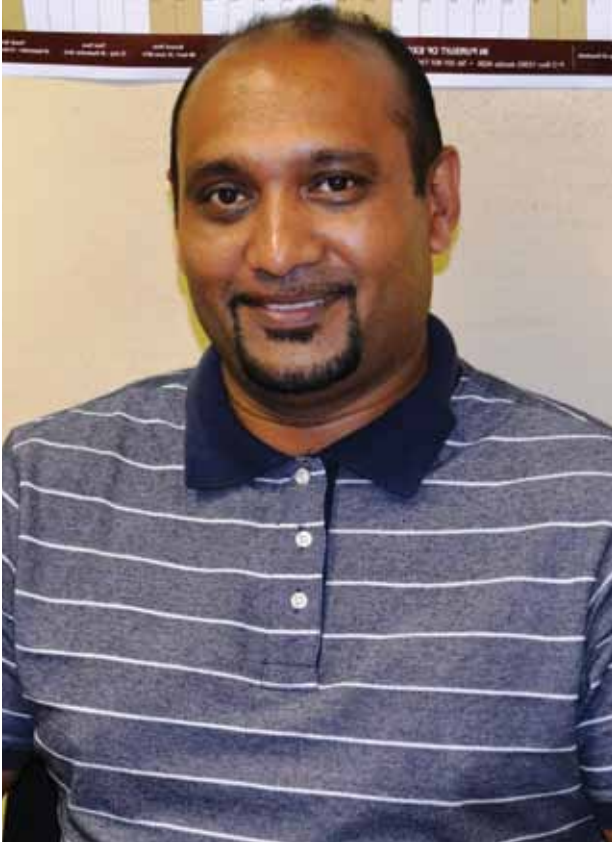


installation and maintenance of the device," he adds.

Boniso revealed his wave energy converter concept in his paper, The innovative design of a wave harvester, presented at the International Conference of Renewable Energies and Power Quality in Cordoba, Spain from 7 to 9 April 2014. The paper was well received.

The wave harvester is designed to work in coastal areas around the world with a minimum wave height of 1.2 metres and a sea depth of between 10 and 20 metres. Boniso says it has taken him three years to arrive at this stage of the project, and the next phase will involve commercialising the device.





LEADING MUT NATURAL SCIENCES ACADEMIC THE FIRST TO SUPERVISE POST-DOCTORAL STUDENTS

Thanda Mbanjwa may admire Professor Roger Coopoosamy, but he now knows that no matter how friendly and jolly he looks, this professor in the MUT Department of Nature Conservation is a serious man! And he has much to show for it, including what Thanda has achieved with the Prof's valued assistance.

Thanda will be graduating soon; he has just completed his Master's from Unisa and working under the very sharp eye of Professor Coopoosamy, completed his thesis, An assessment of the impact of illegal fishing on selected riverline biodiversity in the Province of the Eastern Cape.

Professor Coopoosamy is a drill sergeant who demands results! He comes to work at 6am every day, having driven all the way from Tongaat, north of Durban. This habit has resulted in Professor Coopoosamy publishing more than 25 publications in accredited journals over the past seven years, with another 20-odd academic papers waiting in press. He is currently waiting for a new NRF rating, which will very likely be a C.

Over and above all this, Professor Coopoosamy is supervising post-graduation students; he is currently the only MUT academic to do so. There are three students in total, and Professor Coopoosamy is ultra-confident that one of them will be Researcher of the Year in 2015. Aside from these three postdoctoral students, he is also supervising two MSc and two PhD candidates. He has supervised and co-supervised more than 16 Honours and Master's students over the years.

Professor Coopoosamy's love for nature has seen him forge strong links with like-minded organisations. He collaborates with Silverglen Nature Reserve, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, eThekweni

Municipality and the Traditional Healers Association in KwaZulu-Natal. He is also a leader of the medicinal plant, natural product research, and alternative, indigenous medicine research at MUT.

In addition, he reviews several journals, including the African Journal of Plant Science, Journal of Medicinal Plant Research, African Journal of Biotechnology, Scientific Research and Essays, Research in Pharmaceutical Biotechnology, Journal of Ethnopharmacology and the South African Journal of Botany.

Participating in international conferences has seen Professor Coopoosamy working with academics from around the world. He recently worked with Olufunmiso O. Olajuyigbe on a paper, Influence of first-line antibiotics on the antibacterial activities of acetone stem bark extract of *Acacia mearnsii* DeWild. against drug-resistant bacterial isolates. This paper is featured in the Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine Volume 2014.

Professor Coopoosamy also regularly collaborates with colleagues in his department. In 2012 he and colleagues Dr Georgina Arthur and Dr Kuben Naidoo, along with Bidens Pilosa L penned a paper, Agricultural and pharmaceutical Importance, which was included in the Journal of Medicinal Plants Research Vol. 6.

Professor Roger Coopoosamy – A leading academic in Natural Sciences faculty is the first to supervise post-doctoral students

ALUMNI AFFAIRS

MUT ALUMNUS, SICELO XULU, APPOINTED PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPAL ELECTRICITY UTILITIES



Sicelo Xulu, one of our much-celebrated alumni and MD of City Power in Johannesburg, was inaugurated by the Association of Municipal Electricity Utilities (AMEU) as its new president at its recent annual convention, held in Johannesburg in October.

The AMEU is an association of municipal electricity suppliers, parastatals, academics, commercial and other organisations that have a direct interest in the electricity supply industry in South Africa. Outgoing AMEU President, Hannes Roos, handed over his presidential medallion to Sicelo who humorously remarked, "I am glad this medallion is not made out of pure gold. I am safe!"

Sadly, the same cannot be said about the electricity cables in South Africa, particularly Johannesburg, due to a sharp escalation in cable theft. Unsurprisingly, the core topic of the 99th convention of AMEU was 'working together to curb cable theft'.

Sicelo faces a huge challenge ahead, as he and his team will be expected to work hard to tackle this massive challenge head-on, and find effective, efficient and cost-effective solutions to reducing cable theft.

A member of the Mayoral Committee for Environment and Infrastructure Services, Councillor Matshidiso Mfikoe, suggested that cable theft be classified as sabotage. Johannesburg spends approximately R300 million a year in replacing stolen cables.

This criminal offence is seriously hampering investment and economic growth, but still the judicial system appears to treat cable theft as a petty crime.

But Sicelo says he is ready for the challenge, and over and above this, further aims to promote quality of service and management excellence among AMEU members. He is also tasked with facilitating communication between AMEU members within the technical, economic and political environment, in order to positively influence economic change.

As part of ploughing back to his alma mater, Sicelo believes that he has the power to positively influence the next generation of students of MUT and universities in general. He has also mobilised resources, opened internship placement opportunities and is engaged in fundraising activities on behalf of MUT.

Sicelo holds diverse positions in various organisations such as the South African Institute of Electrical Engineers, the Institute of Directors in South Africa, the South African National Energy Association, and the University of Johannesburg.

TOP MUT ALUMNUS OPENS DOORS FOR ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING STUDENTS

Sicelo Xulu, MD of City Power in Johannesburg, has a deep-seated passion for MUT. He gives unconditionally of his time and effort. Ahead of the Association of Municipal Electricity Utilities (AMEU) Convention, his office worked with MUT's alumni office to secure the attendance of the university's top five final-year electrical engineering students at the convention.

City Power invested generously sponsoring by flights and accommodation for five MUT electrical engineering final year students to attend the EMEU Convention. Sibonelo Mlambo, Eliza Mutombene, Bonelakhe Sikhakhane, Peaceful Makhoba and Silondiwe Khubone had never flown in an airplane before, let alone had the chance to rub shoulders with the high-profile members of SA's power industry, including those from government electricity departments and the wider energy supply sector.

"Students need to understand the challenges the country is facing, and they need to familiarise themselves with the industry in order to understand these challenges. In this way, they become pioneers in the industry and begin to reflect on what they could bring to the sector," says Sicelo.

The AMEU Convention was an excellent platform for the students to get to grips with these challenges. Among other things, they got to understand what cable theft was and its far-reaching consequences in crippling the country's energy resources and hampering investment and economic growth. Sibonelo, a humble rural boy from Newcastle, was bedazzled by new experiences, as he had never been to Johannesburg before

and was entirely unaccustomed to hotels, conferences and gala dinners. He said he felt privileged to have met so many key industry players.

Eliza stated, "I am surrounded by cable theft in my community to the extent that it has become the norm, but the conference has opened my eyes to the reality of the consequences of this crime. I aim to educate as many people as possible."

Bonelakhe used the platform as a networking opportunity. "I have been battling to secure an internship, however the convention exposed me to myriad categories in the electrical engineering industry that I did not know existed. This allows me to broaden my search. It also provided me with vital leads and contacts, which gives me much assurance and hope," he said.

MUT is grateful to Sicelo and other patrons and friends who share its vision and goals and wish to invest in the future of the university and its students.



HOD THOBILE POSWA WRITES THIRD SPIRITUALLY ENRICHING BOOK

"Lead the way by breaking barriers" is a life-changing book written by Thobile Poswa, MUT Head of Department: Environmental Health. The book aims to add value to people's lives by outlining the very essence of life; by providing insight into breaking the barriers that prevent people from fully enjoying their lives; and by helping people reach their full potential.

The book exposes and tears down walled and mirrored mediocre perceptions of 'self', and brings into sharp focus the heart of the barriers people erect. It provides guidance on how best to remain stable in volatile environments, and emphasises the need for people to remain focused and follow their life purpose. It side-steps the myth that if it is impossible, it cannot be done.

The book is suitable for young and old from all walks of life, and all those who need inspiration and upliftment. It paves the way to face life's challenges knowing that obstacles that stand in your way are inevitable, and as such avoiding them is not a solution. The book makes the reader relook their life and adopt a 'can-do attitude' that enables them to press on towards their life goals, regardless of opposing forces.

"I was very impressed with the writing style. Concepts and terms are so clearly elucidated that one is always kept on track with the gist of the contextualisation. This book has an element of uniqueness, as it touches on the most important aspects of life. You can't put the book down once you start reading it. It is inspiring as it touches on the very cornerstones of existence in terms of human values and spiritual revival. It is so easy to read that it transcends generations. It enriches one's life by reconnecting humanity with the Higher Power," says one of the happy readers, Biza Kubheka, a lecturer in the MUT Department of Community Extension.



NEW SRC PRESIDENT BELIEVES IN PUTTING QUALITY EDUCATION AT THE FOREFRONT OF STUDENT DIALOGUE

What this young man from Daveyton, Gauteng, envisions for Mangosuthu University of Technology is to see the majority of the students become involved with the struggle for quality education. His stated mission is to ensure that education is accessible.

Philani Hlatshwayo, MUT 2014/15 Student Representative Council President and SASCO member, had thought education was impossible. In 2009 he matriculated from Vezukhono Secondary School but financial constraints and a lack of understanding of higher education application processes meant he had little hope of receiving a tertiary education.

His enthusiasm for learning attracted the attention of his mother's former employee, who came to his aid. With just R3 000 in his pocket, and his dream, Philani relocated to Durban and discovered MUT. His first encounter at MUT left a memorable impression: "I was assisted by a SASCO student who understood my struggle," said Philani. In 2011 Philani registered for Diploma in Chemical Engineering.

Philani is currently studying Civil Engineering while he looks for employment. His passion for studying social behaviour, development and interaction is what fuels his participation in politics. Philani has dedicated his time to assisting students

and believes that "engagement is a stepping stone for providing solutions." His vision for MUT is "to see the University confronting social challenges, and reviewing the curriculum so that students stand a better chance of being employed."

He emphasises that more focus needs to be exerted on incorporating culture, religion and morals into education: "A society without education is a society that will fail."



Mission

Our mission is to provide advanced, technology-based programmes and services that are career – and business-oriented in the broad fields of engineering, natural and management sciences for the upliftment of talented but mainly disadvantaged individuals. By so doing, the University shows its commitment to social redress. It contributes to creating an equitable and prosperous Southern Africa in which individuals have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Vision

The vision of Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) is to be a pre-eminent higher education institution of technology that fosters socio-economic advancement through the scholarships of teaching and learning, applied research, technology development and transfer and community engagement.

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