



Greetings, MUT Staff, Students, and Stakeholders,

It is with great pleasure that, as the Administrator, I express my utmost delight in being part of the University for the past nine months. During this time, I have had the opportunity to witness first-hand the remarkable achievements of the dedicated individuals employed by the University, who are actively working towards its advancement.

I would like to acknowledge and honor the following significant events and individuals within the university community:

- Installation of the 4th MUT Chancellor, Mr. Sandile Zungu, a well-known and respected businessman who also serves as the owner of Amazulu Football Club. Mr. Zungu's commitment to empowering the University through resource mobilization is commendable, and his acceptance speech resonated with my earlier remarks on the importance of utilizing his networks to rebuild MUT.
- MUT's 2023 Graduation ceremony, which saw the graduation of approximately 2858 students, with 57.63% being female and 42.37% being male. The gender analysis results were heart-warming, as they reflect the struggles that African women have endured in their pursuit of various qualifications. It also indicates the University's alignment with its vision of becoming a transformative and equitable institution, in line with the country's Constitution.

I am deeply grateful for the dedication and hard work exhibited by MUT staff, students, and stakeholders on a daily basis. Their unwavering commitment ensures that the University progresses steadily towards achieving its objectives.

I am particularly pleased to announce the successful conclusion of the 2023 salary adjustment negotiations. I eagerly anticipate further improvements in the governance arrangements and labor engagement processes, aimed at enhancing the meaningfulness of discussions on employment relations matters.

I must express my gratitude to my exceptional technical team, whose core skills have been instrumental in transforming the governance of this esteemed University. From the very beginning, we have been focused on adding value and establishing a sustainable foundation that will endure beyond our tenure.

In this edition, I will address the following critical matters:

- Approach adopted to enhance the governance machinery of the University during my tenure as Administrator and beyond.
- Progress on the implementation of the Fraud Hotline, as promised in Issue 1.
- Stakeholder engagement initiatives undertaken by the Administrator.
- High-level work plan for the remaining period of the Administration.

Approach adopted to enhance the governance machinery of the University during the tenure of the Administrator (and beyond)

Efficient governance machinery is crucial for providing effective leadership within a university. A well-functioning governance system serves several purposes, including improving university performance, enhancing stability and productivity, unlocking new opportunities, mitigating risks, and building a positive reputation that fosters trust among stakeholders.



To strengthen the governance system at MUT, Section 29 of the Higher Education Act allows for the establishment of Council committees that support the efficient functioning of the Council. As the MUT Administrator, I recognized early on in my tenure the importance of creating a system that allows for the type of input typically provided by Council committees, even during the Council's suspension. Consequently, I established structures called "Working Groups," modeled after Council committees, to fulfill a similar role.

In addition to processing submissions for my consideration, these Working Groups aim to enhance the capacity of the participating individuals. Their work is also focused on establishing and improving systems that facilitate the efficient and effective functioning of future Council committees. This work will significantly enhance the Council's functionality, addressing a challenge highlighted in the Assessor's report that led to my appointment as Administrator.

One of the significant milestones achieved by the Working Groups, in collaboration with the Management Team, is the development of comprehensive Terms of Reference. These Terms of Reference will guide the functioning of both the Working Groups during my tenure and the future Council committees. In early May, the Administrator's technical team and Executive Management conducted a two-day workshop to refine these Terms of Reference.

The functioning of the Working Groups has already added tremendous value to the governance machinery of the University. We anticipate a marked improvement in the quality of decisions made to propel the University forward.

Getting the Fraud Hotline to work (as promised in Issue 1)

In the January publication, I mentioned the need to reinstate the Fraud Reporting Hotline at the University. This hotline serves as a credible and reliable avenue for reporting suspected acts of corruption, fraud, mismanagement, and other illegal activities by staff, students, and community members. I am pleased to report that progress has been made in this regard.

Allegations against staff members are reported to the internal (anti) Fraud Working Group for appropriate action, while allegations against the management are reported to the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee of the Council. The Administrator's Audit, Risk, and Compliance Working Group (ARC-WG) now manages these cases. From 2020 to the present, thirteen cases have been reported to the Fraud Working Group, with six cases closed and seven cases still ongoing. Eight cases have been escalated to the ARC-WG, and plans are underway to resolve these outstanding cases promptly.

Restoring the Fraud Hotline is a priority, as it plays a crucial role in mitigating fraud, corruption, and mismanagement at MUT. We have engaged the service provider responsible for managing the Fraud Hotline to ensure its accessibility and effectiveness for the staff and students of MUT.

I will provide updates on the progress of the Fraud Hotline in future publications.

Engagement with Stakeholders

I firmly believe in open communication and meaningful engagement with stakeholders. Such engagement allows for diverse opinions and perspectives, establishing a solid foundation for fulfilling my assigned responsibilities as per the Terms of Reference for my appointment. From the beginning of my tenure, I have prioritized engaging with stakeholders.

Between May 16th and 17th, 2023, my technical team and I held structured consultative sessions with representatives from various stakeholder groups, including Organized Labour (TENUSA and NEHAWU), the Student Representative Council (SRC), the Institutional Forum, and SENEX (Executive Committee of Senate). Unfortunately, the meeting with Convocation had to be postponed and will be rescheduled.

These engagements provided an opportunity for stakeholders to raise pressing issues and concerns, establishing the groundwork for the forthcoming Summit planned by the Administrator. The Summit aims to provide a safe space for free, honest, and robust discussions on the circumstances that led to the University's multiple administrations and, more importantly, how we can prevent such situations from recurring. MUT must occupy its rightful place as a transformative, equitable,

Engagement with Stakeholders continued

sustainable, and academically excellent University of Technology closely connected to its communities.

Preliminary consultations have already taken place with various stakeholders, and additional sessions with other stakeholders are scheduled for later in May 2023. These consultations will gather valuable input on the nature and format of the forthcoming summit, ensuring successful outcomes. Further details about the Summit will be announced in due course.

High-level Action Plan

The Administrator's action plan is based on the Terms of Reference and duties assigned. I have assumed the role of Council and established working groups, operating as Council sub-committees, to review management submissions and provide recommendations.

Currently, the Administrator is reviewing the processes for appointing members to the University Council. Given the Council's critical role in university governance, stringent criteria are being developed to ensure that only individuals of good standing are appointed. This process requires substantial work, and it is anticipated that the new Council will be appointed and inducted by the second quarter of 2024.

The review of senior management appointments made in 2020 has been concluded, and the forensic investigations have begun with the engagement of qualified service providers. The work is expected to be completed by the third quarter of 2023.

Efforts to restore proper governance and management are ongoing and interconnected with the development and implementation of a five-year development plan. Work on the plan has already commenced, and the proposed summit will provide crucial guidance in its formulation.

The appointment of senior staff follows the University Statute and related University Rules. The Office of the Registrar has made significant progress in developing these rules, which will be submitted to the Institutional Forum, the Senate, and the SRC for consultation before seeking the Administrator's approval.

Once the rules have been approved, the recruitment process for the Vice-Chancellor will commence and is expected to be concluded by the third quarter of 2023. The recruitment of other senior officials will follow, starting in the first quarter of 2024 after the Vice-Chancellor's appointment.

Sincerely,

Prof Lourens van Staden

Administrator of MUT

