



uDENGEZI

VC NEWSLETTER

Date Issued: 03 September 2024

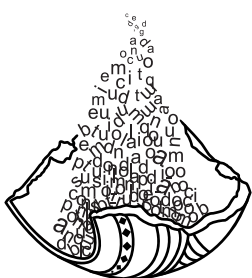
Dear Colleagues

Introducing the VC communication platform

The appointment of Professor Nokuthula Sibiyana as the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of MUT is a giant step in the history of the Institution, the advancement of social justice, and the recognition of the contribution of women in the betterment of life for all. Partnering with the university community towards a common goal and vision is what Professor Sibiyana emphasised in her presentation before her appointment, and her subsequent communication with the public and the University, via the media, after her appointment. To achieve her goal of working towards a shared vision has given birth to a publication called uDengezi, a communication platform for the VC to connect with and engage internal stakeholders at least once a month. uDengezi will profile the major changes that will happen at the University in the next five years.

So, what's in the name?

uDengezi is a very important part in the life of a Zulu person, and by extension, everybody's. All cultures have an equivalent of uDengezi, for similar reasons. uDengezi is a big piece of broken 'ukhamba', which is kept well, and used when required. uDengezi is the VC's precious gem of communicating her vision, achievements, and celebration of the University's successes. It will be published every month. The Vice-Chancellor will use this publication to challenge the University to bring an era of honesty, fairness, boldness, optimism, and professionalism. Breaking away from the painful past and tackling problems as they arise, and making decisions that will shape the future are all at the cornerstone of this publication.



Join the VC as she communicates the wisdom of her people through uDengezi.

Reflection as I celebrate my first month as MUT VC

Dear MUT Community

“I am still overwhelmed by the positive messages and your outpouring of love towards me and my family. The prayers and commendations are inspiring, and I am humbled by all the great gestures. While I acknowledge that I am the first female Vice-Chancellor and Principal in the 45-year history of MUT, please be assured that my approach is that of working with all of you as strategic partners for the growth and development of Mangosuthu University of Technology.

Let me also take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the MUT women, including students. The world will be your oyster if you remember that great things happen to those who put in more effort. The world is rooting for our success.



Vice Chancellor and Principal: Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi

To all staff and students, take note that moving from being a Kasi girl and to various levels of leadership at universities to the capstone position of being Vice-Chancellor and Principal, is quite meaningful for me as I grew up watching how MUT's presence had changed the lives of people I looked up to. Had my passion not been a career in nursing, I am without a doubt certain that I would have registered here at MUT as a student and saved my parents' meagre savings by being a 'stay at home student'. Unfortunately, it could not be, as my career was to be shaped six hours from Umlazi Township. That is how long it took the train to reach Empangeni Station from Durban during those days. One of my goals is to ensure that we expand the academic offering for MUT and include some of the qualifications that would make it financially viable for a parent with great aspirations for their children to send them to MUT.

While my appointment is being celebrated as the first woman to lead MUT, I am celebrating the fact that we will all work together to make everyone who has a relationship with MUT contribute to our university motto, 'shape and own the future'. My sleepless nights these days centre around the core ideologies for MUT which focus on what we stand for and why we exist, underscored by our values of 'accountability, respect, integrity, and excellence'. I envision a future with you where we are all driven by this common goal of creating BHAGS (Big. Hairy. Audacious. Goals). Together let us be committed to creating a huge daunting challenge with a clear finishing line.

Very soon, I will concretise my short-term

goals and long-term goals through a structured consultative process with all strategic partners. I invite you to work with my office towards re-positioning MUT into a thriving township higher education institution that can produce graduates of global

standard and quality. I am committed to creating an agile University that identifies threats and works towards creating a harmonious University.”

“I love you all and will pray for you to achieve these BHAGS.”

Aligning all stars at MUT

I joined MUT when the University is under the administration of Professor Lourens Van Staden who is supported by his technical team. With his team, Professor Van Staden is working with executive management to develop a Five-Year Development Plan for MUT. This Five-Year Development Plan will lay the foundation for both our next strategic plan and the Student Enrolment and Efficiency Plan (SEEP), which also begin their new cycles in January 2026. I assume the Vice-Chancellor position at a period when the MUT Strategy 2025 is in its close-out phase. What a great moment to commence my tenure as this gives me a competitive advantage to align what we want MUT to be from 2026-2031 closely aligned with what the Administrator is doing.

By the third week of August, together with my executive management committee, we

had already drafted the building blocks for the next strategy, including the vision, mission, values, pillars, and goals. As the Chief institutional strategist, I had to present these building blocks to senate, senior and middle management, as well as organised labour. I was impressed by the robust discussions and the collegiality of the discussions during our consultative meeting on 19 August 2024. While there were difficult conversations, I am deeply humbled that the stars participating in these discussions showed that NOW is all about putting MUT first. We are now consolidating all the invaluable input for further comments and have conceptualised plans on how these should be cascaded to the entire university community. The strategic plan must become ours. We must own it so we are all driven by the desire to create an MUT that we will happily hand over to the next generation.

My first BHAG

I have indicated on several platforms that I inherit an institution in the red and I have taken it upon myself that I will be approaching various funders and individuals with an inclination to invest in MUT research and join us in establishing centres of excellence.

On Tuesday, 27 August, we continued a conversation with the South African National Energy Development Institute (SANEDI). The meeting was attended by the SANEDI CEO, Dr Titus Mathe, an MUT alumnus who despite attaining his terminal qualification at Howard University, in the USA, and has a string of leadership qualifications, is still proud of MUT and has not forgotten his roots. The meeting was attended by top MUT researchers whose focus is on the areas of water, food, energy, and climate as they will

play an integral part in the running of the Centre of Excellence in Energy-Water-Food-Climate (EWFC) being proposed by SANEDI at MUT. This follows an agreement between SANEDI and MUT which was signed during the EnergyWaterFoodClimate Nexus Summit in July 2024. SANEDI was the biggest funder of the EnergyWaterFoodClimate nexus summit along with Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University (FAMU). Furthermore, SANEDI is finalising approval for the initial investment for the establishment of the centre which will cover three years.



SANEDI CEO, Dr Titus Mathe and MUT Vice Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiya



Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Professor Babatunde Bakare

The partnership between SANEDI and MUT offers several opportunities, particularly in the following areas:

• **Research Collaboration:**

MUT will collaborate with SANEDI on research projects that address the EWFC nexus, including co-organising workshops and events related to EWFC. This will provide MUT with access to SANEDI's research networks and resources, enabling joint research initiatives that contribute to energy security, climate resilience, and sustainable development.

• **Capacity Building:**

SANEDI will support MUT in developing research capacity through mentoring, training, and skills transfer, particularly for academic staff and students. This will enhance MUT's ability to conduct high-impact research and contribute to national and regional energy and climate goals.

• **Innovation and Knowledge Exchange:**

The partnership will facilitate knowledge exchange and the development of innovative solutions to address energy and climate challenges. MUT will have the opportunity to engage with industry partners and other stakeholders, driving technological advancements and practical applications in the EWFC sectors.

• **Media and Public Engagement:**

MUT will benefit from increased visibility through SANEDI's positioning in the media, including slots to MUT Campus Radio. This will enhance MUT's profile as a key player in energy and climate research.

Brand positioning for MUT

It has been an honour to have received such positive media coverage in the past month.

Eswatini Sunday

NEWS 4 August, 2024 | 9

First woman VC at SA's only township university faces daunting task

By Edwin Naidu

THE first female vice-chancellor in 45 years at South Africa's only township-based university, Professor Nokuthula Sibya, says her tough upbringing has prepared her for the rough road ahead.

The mother of two boys takes the hot seat at the Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) today (4 August 2024), mindful that she is working with limited funding for community initiatives, overcoming infrastructure challenges in the township, and balancing the university needs with development goals.

Addressing deep-rooted poverty and unemployment in Umlazi, southwest of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, is high on the list of socio-economic priorities for the trained nurse, whose love for the profession mirrors that of Florence Nightingale, the 'Lady with the Lamp' who revolutionised nursing.

The former deputy vice-chancellor of teaching and learning at the Durban University of Technology (DUT), where she began as a lecturer in 2009, obtained her doctoral qualification in 2004. By returning to her roots, Sibya says she is determined to tackle the effects of historical disadvantage on education and development and to overcome scepticism and hopelessness in the community she grew up in.

Reflecting on her appointment, Sibya says she feels honoured to lead MUT as its new vice-chancellor, starting at the beginning of National Women's Month

not allowed to be vice-chancellors when we go to the forums. This bottleneck must be addressed.

QW: What is your vision for MUT, and what role should it play in South Africa's higher education sector?

NS: Before I shared my vision with MUT, I mean with the council and the panel members, I shared with them a commitment if ever appointed. I quote of [the Bahamian entrepreneur] Miles Murre, who once said that people fail into one of three groups: the few who make things happen, the many who watch things happen, and the overwhelming majority who live our nation of what happens.

I said that, if I am appointed as vice-chancellor, I commit to ensuring that the MUT community steps waiting for things to happen and

UNW: How vital will international collaborations be for MUT?

NS: Yes, that is my focus. I did indicate in my presentation and interview that I want us to strengthen and bridge the gap in our knowledge production so that we are competitive at the global level, even the kind of students that we produce. Our graduates must be the graduates that can compete at a worldwide level. Hence, my priority will be establishing an international office we currently do not have.

Fortunately, we have garnered great funding from the [South African] Department of Higher Education and Training to set up an office, which will be my priority.

UNW: Describe growing up in a township and explain how you rose in life and the many challenges you faced to become a nurse in nursing, and a vice-chancellor.

NS: I always sat, once a nurse, always a nurse. Whenever I share my bio, I do not forget to mention that I am a nurse. My PhD was in nursing. Nursing is close to my heart.



▲ First woman VC at SA.

going up and cutting the grass. That is the kind of life that I went through. But I always looked on the positive side because it taught me to ensure that my ex-

But we did not go hungry, as learners at my school received meals.

Due to my upbringing in a township where life was

eSwatini Sunday Coverage

The positive media articles across South Africa and outside have given great visibility to the MUT brand and have gotten people talking about this Gem nestled in the streets of Umlazi Township. This is a gain for MUT. I need to mention that August has been an august month for us, no pun intended. Two MUT researchers won awards as outstanding speakers at the University of Galway, Ireland, during the Joint Conference of ISEH (International Symposium on Environment and Health), ICEPH (International Conference on Environmental Pollution and Health) and ISEG (Environmental Symposium on Environmental Geochemistry) held from 11 to 18 August 2024. Dr. Devandren Nadasan scooped "Best Oral Presentation Award" while Professor Xolile Mkhize scooped the "Most Insightful Paper Award".

MOVING BACK TO COMMUNITY

MUT's first woman VC breaking boundaries and inspiring others

PROFESSOR NOKUTHULA SIBYA

AN INSPIRING AND INSPIRING woman, Professor Nokuthula Sibya, the first female vice-chancellor of the Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), has been appointed to lead the institution. Sibya, who has a doctorate in nursing, is a former deputy vice-chancellor of the Durban University of Technology (DUT). Sibya, who has a doctorate in nursing, is a former deputy vice-chancellor of the Durban University of Technology (DUT).



PROFESSOR NOKUTHULA SIBYA, the first female vice-chancellor of the Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), has been appointed to lead the institution.

They say that when she starts to work, she will be able to do a lot of things. She is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model. She is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model.

She is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model. She is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model.

She is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model. She is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model.

She is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model. She is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model.

MUT is a township university established in 1979. It is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model. She is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model.

Daily News Coverage

Nazo, varsity appoints first female boss!

BY SITHI MHLISO

THE Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) has appointed its first female vice-chancellor, Professor Nokuthula Sibya, to lead the institution.

The 45-year-old Sibya, who has a doctorate in nursing, is a former deputy vice-chancellor of the Durban University of Technology (DUT).

Sibya, who has a doctorate in nursing, is a former deputy vice-chancellor of the Durban University of Technology (DUT).

She is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model. She is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model.

She is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model. She is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model.

She is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model. She is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model.

MUT is a township university established in 1979. It is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model. She is a woman who is not only a leader but also a role model.



Professor Nokuthula Sibya says she's deeply honoured to lead Mangosuthu University of Technology.

Daily Sun Coverage

While we were still beaming from the excellence displayed by MUT researchers at Galway, more great news streamed in on the evening of 23 August 2024. As the university community we celebrate Nokukhanya Thembane, a MUT academic and researcher who has been awarded the coveted Dr Esther Mahlangu Doctoral Fellowship in Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Thembane was awarded the fellowship at the 2024 South African Women in Science Awards (SAWiSA), a glittering ceremony hosted by the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) in Johannesburg on August 23, 2024. These achievements give me hope that we are on course to shape and own the future of MUT.



MUT academic and researcher, Nokukhanya Thembane receiving a Dr Esther Mahlangu Doctoral Fellowship in Indigenous Knowledge Systems award

Let us connect again next month.



MUT
MANGOSUTHU
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY