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A heartfelt Thank You

I am deeply moved and grateful for the incredible support and warmth shown during my installation ceremony as Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Mangosuthu University of Technology held at Dr Pixley ka Isaka KaSeme Hall on 01 November 2024. The event was a resounding success, and it would not have been possible without the dedication and enthusiasm of our excellent staff.

From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank everyone who attended the ceremony in person and through virtual platforms. I am told we had a staff attendance of over 200, which is not something I take for granted. No Vice-Chancellor can succeed in leading an institution without staff support and active involvement across all levels. All of you are a critical piece of the puzzle we are creating towards achieving a united and prosperous MUT. Your participation made a very positive impression of MUT, and I have received many commendations from other vice-chancellors and deputy vice-chancellors. We have been told several times that we need to change towards a positive institutional culture at MUT. The energy in the room was profound, and it was clear that we were united in our vision for MUT's future.

The music, the speeches, and the overall atmosphere were nothing short of inspirational. I was particularly touched by the messages of support from the Institutional Forum and the organised labour that echoed our collective goal of making MUT a beacon of

hope and a pioneer of excellence. Your belief in our mission and your unwavering support will drive us forward. I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Registrar's Office for playing a leading role in the





planning process; Marcomms for your efforts in promoting the event and capturing its essence through branding and events coordinating; the Student Affairs Department for playing multiple roles and hosting our guests during lunch; the Transport department for making sure that delegates are professionally moved between Seme hall and the student centre; Institutional Advancement for the event support; Operations directorate for ensuring the cleanliness of the campus and safety of our guests; our SHE officer for ensuring that we maintain and comply to event safety regulations; the MUT Choir for the outstanding

performances that added a magical touch to the ceremony; other colleagues who were pulled in from different departments to provide event support; and lastly, I would like to acknowledge the presence and support of Executive Management. Your encouragement and belief in our shared goals are invaluable.

I am confident that with your continued dedication, we will achieve great things. Our institution is poised to significantly impact Umlazi, KwaZulu-Natal, across South Africa, and beyond.

[Link to VC installation speech:](#)



Moving forward together: post-installation engagements

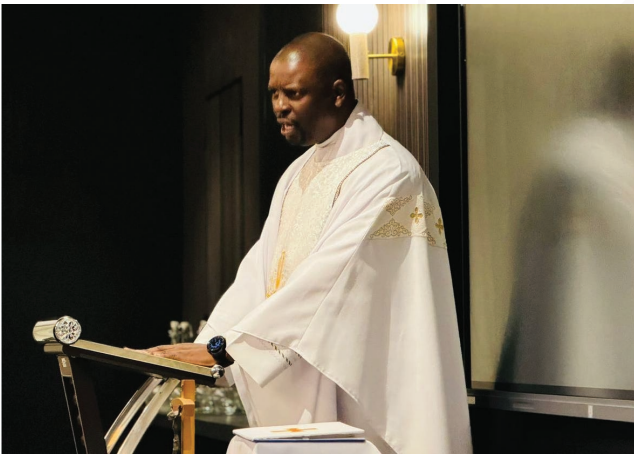
Following the inspiring installation ceremony, I had the privilege of meeting with various institutional structures to reflect on post-installation projects and enhance my vision for MUT. These meetings have been incredibly productive and have reinforced my belief in our collective strength and shared vision for Mangosuthu University of Technology. Our discussions have centred around several key initiatives that will drive MUT forward and ensure we continue to meet the needs of our community and beyond. Below are the activities that took place immediately after the installation ceremony.



Vice-Chancellor Professor Nokuthula Sibiya.

A prayer of gratitude and guidance

As I reflect on the recent installation ceremony, I am reminded of the profound scripture quoted by Reverend Lucky Zondi, who facilitated a prayer session that followed on the evening of 1 November 2024. Words from Proverbs 10:22: "The blessing of the Lord brings wealth, without a painful toil for it." Being installed to lead this esteemed institution is a blessing from God that I receive with an open heart and deep gratitude.



Reverend Lucky Zondi

This role is not just a position of leadership but a divine calling to serve with wisdom and integrity. I am humbled by the trust placed in me and am committed to leading MUT towards green pastures, not for my name, but for God's glory. Noting the responsibility that comes with the role of vice chancellor and principal, I hosted a prayer session attended by my spiritual leaders from the Lutheran Church, family members, and some MUT colleagues. The prayer was a moment of unity, reflection, and spiritual grounding that added a significant dimension to the day's events.

Taking from the evening's scripture, Reverend Zondi reminded me that creating an environment conducive to growth and excellence is crucial. "No matter how many books or chapters you have written, you must realise that true success is rooted in prayer and faith. This is a new chapter for you and MUT and it is no longer business as usual. We are here praying for guidance so that when you make strategic decisions, you do so with the confidence that God has anointed you to lead this institution. I appeal to your family and the entire MUT community to support you in this journey. Encouragement and prayers are vital for your success," said Reverend Zondi.

I was more encouraged by wise words from my husband, Mr Mfundu Sibiya, who said: "I echo the sentiment that there is no substitute for hard work. Keep your eyes on the ball and remember that your respect for family and dedication have brought you this far. May the blessings continue to flow over our children and future generations."



Professor Sibiya with Mr Mfundu Sibiya

Engaging with the Gender Forum: our step towards inclusivity

I am delighted to share my recent meeting with the Gender Forum, which is vital to our commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment at MUT. This meeting, held on Saturday, 2 November, as part of my post-installation engagements, highlighted the critical work needed to promote gender equality within our institution. During our discussion, we implored the Gender Forum Executive on the importance of crafting essential initiatives aimed at addressing gender-related challenges.

The MUT Gender Forum is a project I initiated when I was the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation, and Engagement, influenced mainly by being the only female in the executive leadership. As the accounting officer, I am now responsible for ensuring that MUT remains a safe and supportive space for everyone. Dr Mabongi Mvuyana, the Forum's Chairperson, assured me of their commitment and intention to collaborate with other departments and external organisations to amplify our efforts. I encourage everyone to engage with the Gender Forum and participate in their programs.



Professor Sibiya with some of the MUT Gender Forum Executive, from left, Dr Mabongi Mvuyane (Forum Chairperson), Professor Alfred Msomi, Pinky Khoza, and Dr Thobeka Makhathini



Engaging with Women in Climate Change: A Commitment to Sustainability

I am also excited to share my recent experience meeting with the Women in Climate Change. This meeting held on 2 November 2024, was a powerful reminder of women's critical role in driving sustainability and environmental stewardship. The MUT Women in Climate Change is a small but very dynamic group of women leading the charge on climate sustainability research so that MUT puts in efforts to realising the Sustainable Development Goals. They are exploring new technologies and methodologies to address climate-related challenges, focusing on wastewater management, air pollution control, e-waste management, food security and sustainable agriculture, energy efficiency, sustainable human settlements, and other related areas.

Their research contributes valuable insights and solutions that can be applied both locally and globally. I encourage all other MUT women researchers to engage with these initiatives and support our collective efforts to combat climate change. Enhancing these programmes will take us a few steps toward achieving my five-year vision for MUT. The contact person is Dr Thobeka Makhathini: thobeka@mut.ac.za as we drive our programmes towards a sustainable and greener MUT.



Professor Sibiya with the MUT Women in Climate Change, from left, Dr Mabongi Mvuyane, Dr Thobeka Makhathini, Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni, and Professor Xolile Mkhize

MUT
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Notable stakeholder engagements

Immediately after returning from an international trip and planning for the installation ceremony, I had the privilege to meet the newly elected Convocation Executive on Wednesday, 30 October 2024.



Sandile Dlamini, President of MUT Convocation

The meeting began a fruitful partnership between the university management and Convocation.

I was excited to hear the Convocation President, Sandile Dlamini, expressing their commitment to MUT's success, paving the way for resource mobilization and bringing positive changes to our University.

The Convocation Executive collectively impressed upon the need for their active involvement in university decision-making processes; this included the Convocation Executives to make the upcoming annual fundraising dinner on 14 November a more interactive and memorable event.

The Convocation Executive is no stranger to this role, and this familiarity will be an advantage. I hope that we can leverage their experience, resources, and networks to spearhead fundraising initiatives that will provide much-needed bursaries and financial aid to students.

I am happy to have met the Convocation Executive during the strategy development process for our 2030 strategy. I pledged to ConvExco that we would work together to ensure that all plans align with the University's strategy.



Media Engagements

Despite my busy schedule, I am taking my role of positioning MUT very seriously, and to achieve this, I have set aside time for media engagement. Throughout these media engagements, I am talking about my vision to engage with student leadership and continuously with NSFAS so that funding for our students is released

timely, as well as our goal to fast-track projects and plans so that we accommodate most of our students internally as these efforts will make a significant improvement to our financial situation. The vision is not just about the next five years; it is about laying the foundation for long-term success and impact.

Here is the current media engagement schedule:

- **Friday, 1 November 2024**
14h30: **ENCA News**
22h15: **SABC News**
- **Monday, 4 November 2024**
15h20: **Vuma FM**
- **Tuesday, 5 November 2024**
8h20: **SAFM**
18h15: **Ubuntu Radio, DSTV Channel 888**
(to be aired on 8 November
between 13h00 – 13h20)
- **Thursday, 7 November 2024**
Morning: **East Coast Radio**



Let us connect again next month.

