



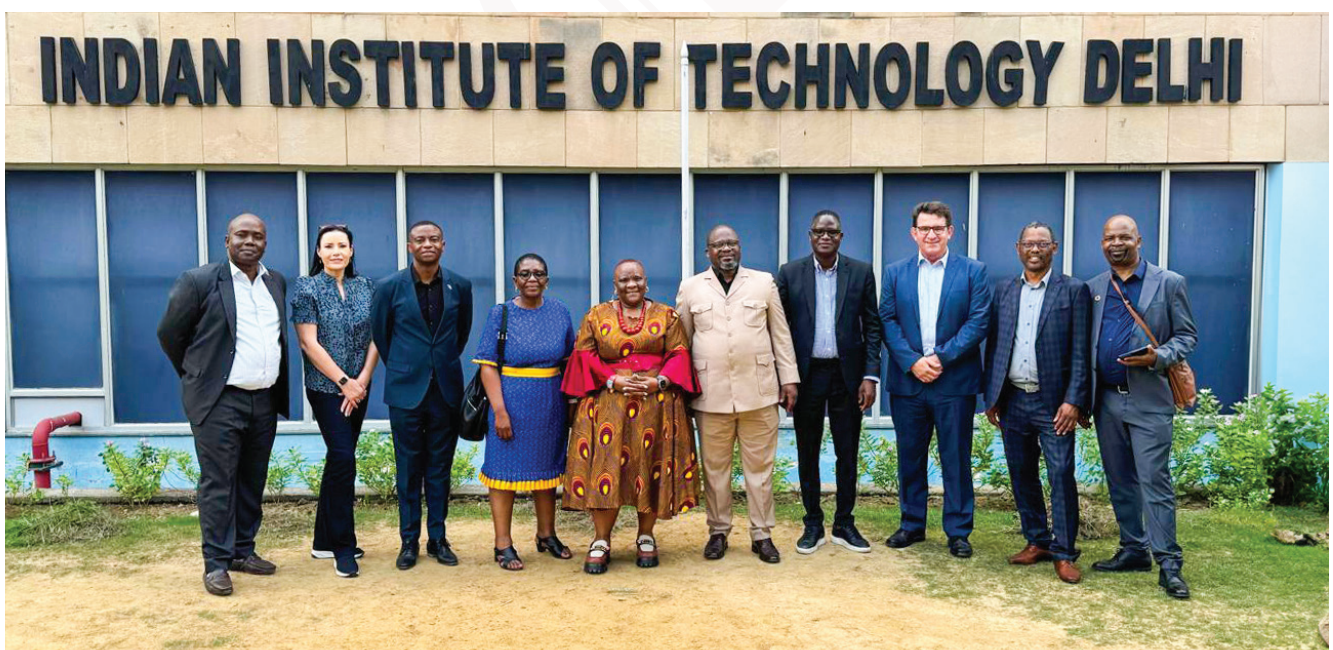
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THENSA's Transformative Study Visit to India

In October 2024, I had the incredible opportunity to be part of the Technological Higher Education Network South Africa (THENSA) delegation on a study visit to India. This journey was not just about exploring new academic and research collaborations but also about experiencing the vibrant educational landscape of India. As THENSA delegation, our mission was clear: to identify new areas of mutual interest, enhance existing partnerships, and explore opportunities for joint research, scholarships, and staff exchange programs between South African and Indian institutions.

The study visit was a whirlwind of meetings, discussions, and was a significant step towards enhancing THENSA member institution's global outreach. The potential for collaborative partnerships in applied research and innovation ecosystems, climate change, quantum computing, collaborations in artificial intelligence, entrepreneurship, peace studies, and rural innovation was particularly exciting.

Witnessing the depth and breadth of India's higher education system and its commitment to innovation and



Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, fifth from left, at Indian Institute of Technology Delhi

research was eye-opening. The visit underscored the immense potential for international collaboration, particularly in areas like artificial intelligence, climate change, and sustainable energy. The visit to the SELCO Foundation in Bangalore stood out as it provided more alignment to MUT's research niche areas and goals. SELCO's sustainable energy solutions for underserved communities and their approach to ecosystem building were models we could adapt and implement at MUT. The engagements with institutions like IIT Delhi, IIT Bombay, and the SELCO Foundation highlighted the importance of fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. Seeing

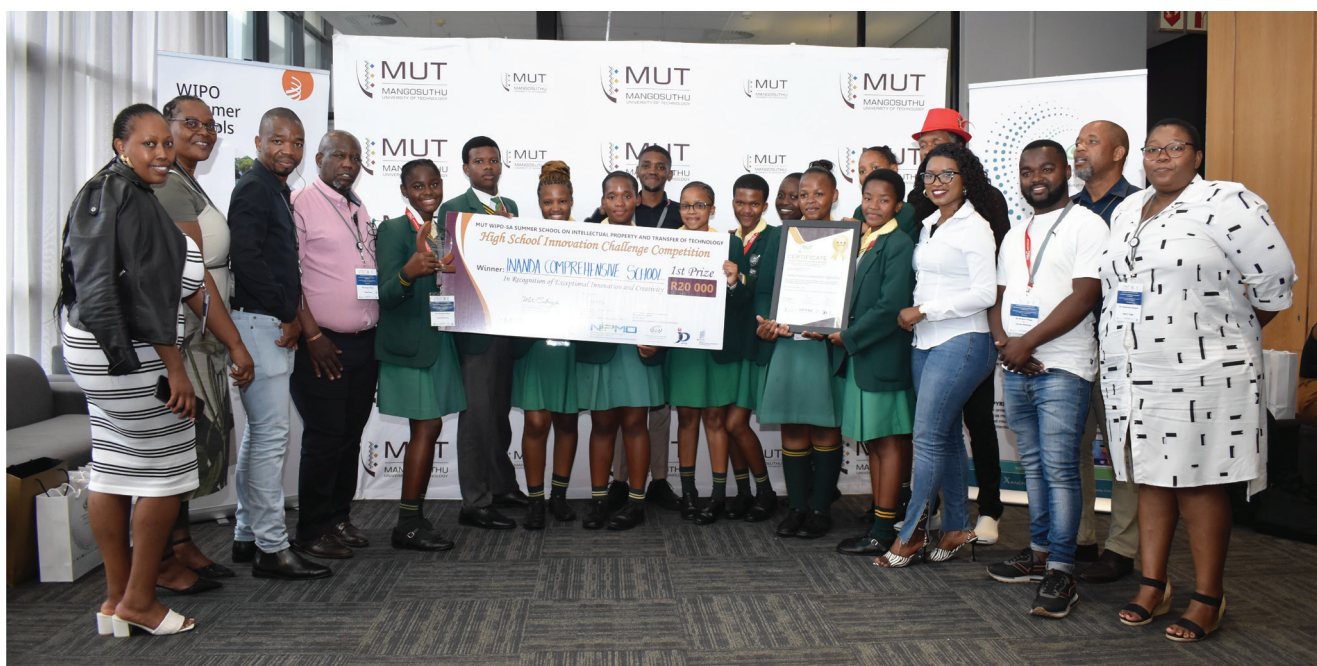
firsthand how these institutions support startups and translate research into practical solutions was inspiring. It reinforced the idea that universities should not only be centres of learning but also hubs of innovation that drive societal progress.

The visit left me motivated to pursue new initiatives and collaborations. The potential for joint research projects, student and staff exchanges, and shared innovation platforms is immense. I am eager to leverage the connections made during this visit to drive impactful projects that benefit both South African and Indian institutions.

Celebrating Creativity and Leadership at the WIPO High Schools Competition

At Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), we are committed to fostering innovation, creativity, and problem-solving among young people. The WIPO Summer School hosted by the MUT's Research Directorate from 25 November to 6 December 2024 served as an invaluable platform to raise awareness about intellectual property, technology transfer,

commercialization, and innovation. Our journey with the WIPO Summer Schools Competition began with the selection of these remarkable schools: Nombika High School from Ndwedwe, Inanda Comprehensive High School from Inanda Newtown, Mthwalume High School from Mthwalume, Ndukwehle High School from Umlazi, and Velabahleke High School also from Umlazi. Each



First price winners at the WIPO Summer School 2024, high school competition, Inanda Comprehensive High School

of these schools brought unique perspectives and boundless energy to the competition, making it a truly enriching experience for all involved.

This initiative was designed not only to challenge these learners but to unleash their potential in addressing critical problems faced by their communities. The challenges they tackled were aligned with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), encouraging them to envision solutions to societal, economic, and environmental issues. It was inspiring to see how these young minds approached these challenges with creativity and determination. The prizes were substantial, with the first prize being R20,000, the second prize R15,000, the third prize R10,000, and the

fourth and fifth prizes R5,000 each. These awards reflect the value we place on creativity and dedication and aim to inspire learners to continue pursuing innovative solutions to real-world problems.

I want to congratulate Inanda Comprehensive High School for walking away with the ultimate prize taking back to their school R20 000. The prize money will go a long way towards improving their innovative ideas. I must also extend my gratitude to the technology transfer office for bringing such a significant global project to MUT. Your vision for innovation has put MUT on the world stage and strengthened our potential to attract prospective students.



Excellence in Community Engagement: VC Reflection

I felt a profound sense of pride on 26 November 2024 when I addressed the audience gathered at Dr Pixley ka Seme Hall for the 3rd MUT Community Engagement (CE) Excellence Awards Ceremony, a day dedicated to celebrating the incredible efforts of our staff and students in making a tangible difference in our communities. Community engagement is one of the three pillars and one of the strategic goals of MUT. It is not just an add-on; it is integrated into the core activities of our institution, cutting across teaching, learning, and research. It is through these activities that we develop responsible and compassionate citizens, strengthen our core values, and contribute to social, economic, and ecological sustainability.

The Community Engagement Excellence Awards are a testament to the value we place on community engagement. These awards provide appropriate incentives and rewards for staff and students who actively participate in CE activities. By recognizing outstanding performance and excellence in CE, we encourage our staff and students to embody MUT's vision: To be a transforming, equitable, sustainable and academically excellent University of Technology anchored in its communities. The awards also serve as a mechanism to achieve our strategic goals, and objectives, while giving concrete expression to our core values of accountability, integrity, respect, and excellence.



Vice-Chancellor Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, right, with Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni at the Community Engagement Excellence Awards Ceremony

This story of the CE Excellence Awards is a reminder of the power of community engagement and the difference we can make when we work together. It is a celebration of the dedication and hard work of our staff, students, and partners, and a testament to the transformative impact of education and collaboration. Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are building a brighter, more sustainable future for all.



A Heartfelt Festive Season Message from the Vice-Chancellor and Principal



Dear MUT Community,

As we approach the end of 2024, I want to take a moment to reflect on the remarkable achievements and milestones we have accomplished together this year. It has been a year of resilience and renewal, and I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for our entire community's dedication and hard work. Our commitment to excellence in all areas has been evident, and I am confident that we will continue to build on this momentum in the coming year.

As we look forward to 2025, I am excited about the strategic goals we have set for ourselves. These include expanding our undergraduate and

postgraduate programs, enhancing academic staff qualifications, and building a sustainable future through initiatives related to climate change and sustainability. Our focus on financial prudence and improving our support environment will ensure that we remain a leading institution in higher education.

As we head into the holiday season, I encourage you to take a well-deserved break. Whether you plan to relax on the beach, binge-watch your favourite series, or tackle that DIY project you have been putting off, make sure to recharge and come back ready to shape and own the future together.

Wishing you all a restful and joyous holiday season.



Let us connect again next year