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Vice-Chancellor's New Year Welcome Note

Happy New Year and welcome to 2025! As we embark on this new year, I am filled with optimism and excitement for the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. I hope you all had a restful and joyous holiday season and are ready to start the year with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

Looking back on the past year, we have much to be proud of. Our University has made significant strides in various areas; from academic excellence and research advancements, to community engagement and infrastructure development. These achievements are a testament to the hard work, dedication and collaboration of our entire University community. As we move forward, we must continue to embrace new opportunities for growth and innovation. This year we will focus on creating more opportunities for student and staff engagement. Even though my schedule is tight, I am committing that engagement with key internal stakeholders is a priority for me. I want to assure staff and colleagues that we will soon be meeting as part of my planned conversation with the Vice-Chancellor and Principal session that we had to postpone to accommodate the January registration. Hosting my staff engagement post registration will allow all staff to attend this important curtain raiser as we will together craft the route for the year 2025.

I was very humbled to meet with parents of first-year

students on Saturday, 8 February 2025. At the meeting, we committed to work as a collective to ensure that MUT students get a holistic university experience. We also pledged that through various student support programmes, we will pay strong attention to the social and spiritual wellbeing of our students because a strong university community is





Vice-Chancellor Professor Nokuthula Sibiya at the Parents' Day meeting

essential for our success. I encourage all of you to actively participate in university events, engage with your peers and colleagues, and contribute to the vibrant campus life.

The year ahead promises to be filled with exciting projects and initiatives. We will continue to work towards our strategic goals, including expanding our academic programmes, enhancing our facilities, and strengthening our partnerships with industry and other institutions. Your involvement and support are crucial to achieving these goals, and I am confident that, together, we can make 2025 a remarkable year for our University.

As we begin this new year, I wish you all success in your academic and professional endeavours. May 2025 be a year of growth for MUT and its people.

Warm regards,
Professor Nokuthula Sibiya
 Vice-Chancellor and Principal
 Mangosuthu University of Technology



MUT Leadership Charts New Course at EMC Workshop

From December 11 to 13, 2024, the Executive Management Committee (EMC) of Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) convened a pivotal workshop aimed at accelerating the University's progress and shaping its future. Facilitated by Professor Ahron Rensburg, a respected mentor, and counsellor in higher education, the workshop, that took place off campus, brought together the university leaders to foster transformational leadership and develop a Leadership Charter for MUT.

The workshop kicked off with a focus on the critical role of leadership in setting the University culture. Participants, including Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi and other senior leaders, were encouraged to reflect on their best selves, and align their actions with their purpose. Various leadership styles were introduced, including the Ubuntu philosophy, which highlights African moral values, and the Taoist philosophy that advocates humility and silent transformation. The concept of Ikigai, or finding one's

purpose, was also explored. This Japanese way of life is usually translated as a 'reason for being', or "a reason to wake up in the morning". The day ended with a team-building cook-off competition, fostering camaraderie among EMC members.

The final day centered on the importance of building and sustaining relationships across all sectors. Storytelling was highlighted as a powerful tool in leadership, and the need for resource allocation to support productivity was discussed. The workshop concluded with Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Sibiyi, emphasising continuous engagement and the forthcoming draft of the Leadership Charter, marking a new chapter for MUT's leadership. The EMC workshop was a significant step towards transformational leadership at MUT, setting the stage for a future driven by purpose, empathy, and high performance.



Vice-Chancellor Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, Fifth from the Left with the facilitator Professor Ahron Rensburg on the left of the VC

EMC Members Bond Over Cook-Off Competition



In a delightful twist to their usual leadership activities, the Executive Management Committee (EMC) of Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) on 12 December 2024, engaged in a cook-off competition as part of a leadership signature relationship event. This unique team-building exercise aimed to foster camaraderie and strengthen bonds among the University's top leaders.

The EMC members were grouped into teams and tasked with preparing a meal together. For some, this was a completely new experience, as they had never even seen a chopping board before. However, the knowledge that the potjie they were making would be their dinner motivated everyone to learn quickly and work efficiently as a team.

The competition was fierce. In the end, the crown for the best meal went to 'Team Boss', comprised of Dr Anette Mienie, Director of Research; and Dr Phumzile Masala, MUT Registrar. Their culinary skills and teamwork impressed the judges and earned them the top spot. While 'Team Boss' took home the title, the true spirit of the event was about teamwork and collaboration. There were no losers on the day, as every participant contributed to the success of their team and enjoyed the process of working together.



Events like these are crucial for building stronger connections within the leadership team. By stepping out of their usual roles and engaging in fun, collaborative activities, the EMC members were able to develop a deeper understanding of each other and strengthen their working relationships.

MUT Vice-Chancellor advocates for stronger research ties at NUST ceremony

Keynote speaker Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, MUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal had the honour to address leadership and academic staff when Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) marked the beginning of the academic year with an inspiring opening ceremony on 6 February 2025. The event was themed "Creating a Research and Development Culture in a Teaching Intensive University."



Vice-Chancellor Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, on the Right with Professor Eroid Naomab the Vice-Chancellor of Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST)

A key highlight of the ceremony was the emphasis on the significant partnership between MUT and NUST. This collaboration, formalised through a memorandum of understanding (MOU), aims to strengthen ties between the two institutions and promote joint research initiatives, faculty and student exchanges, and the

development of innovative academic programmes. Professor Sibiya expressed her gratitude to NUST Vice-Chancellor Professor Eroid Naomab for his commitment to this partnership. She noted that the collaboration would not only enhance the research capabilities of both universities but also contribute to the broader goal of advancing higher education and technological innovation in the region.

In her address, Professor Sibiya emphasised the transformative power of education and the critical role of universities in shaping world economies. Professor Sibiya highlighted the necessity of integrating a robust research and development culture within teaching-intensive universities to enhance academic excellence and drive societal progress.

"Universities are called not only to impart knowledge, but also to generate new knowledge through research and development," Professor Sibiya said. Professor Sibiya underscored the importance of fostering an environment where innovation thrives and where students, staff, and researchers are empowered to make meaningful contributions to the world. "Universities of technology, like NUST and MUT, play a crucial role in fostering applied research and developing solutions that can be directly implemented in industry and society. By fostering a culture that values and supports research, we can ensure that our universities remain at the forefront of knowledge creation and dissemination," concluded Professor Sibiya. Professor Sibiya concluded her address by encouraging collaboration among academics, researchers, students, administrators, and industry partners to create an environment where research and teaching complement each other.

Let us connect again next month.

