



uDENGEZI

VC's NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to the latest edition of the uDengezi Newsletter! We're excited to embrace the theme of stakeholder engagement. Here at MUT, we wholeheartedly value the essential role our stakeholders play in guiding the vibrant future of our institution. In this edition, we are thrilled to showcase our ongoing efforts to create meaningful connections and collaborations that enrich our community. As we forge ahead in building bridges of knowledge, we invite you to celebrate our achievements with us and join in on our continuous journey to enhance the quality and impact of higher education at MUT. Let us come together to cultivate an engaging, supportive environment that uplifts our institution and nurtures the vibrant tapestry of our diverse stakeholders. With enthusiasm and a shared vision, the sky is the limit!

A Milestone for MUT: First full Council meeting ushers in new leadership chapter

March 27, 2025, marked an exhilarating day for MUT as it celebrated a groundbreaking milestone with the inaugural full Council meeting! This momentous occasion showcased the university's remarkable progress and resilience, boldly declaring that MUT has risen beyond Administration and is now embarking on an exciting journey filled with renewed energy and purpose.



MUT's first full Council under the tenureship of Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, seated first from the left

The full Council meeting was nothing short of historic, spotlighting the relentless dedication and teamwork of everyone who has worked tirelessly to guide the university toward stability and growth. Under the dynamic leadership of Interim Chairperson, Professor Stanley Mukhola, the meeting flowed seamlessly, reflecting his unwavering commitment to MUT's vision and strategic goals. Professor Mukhola's skillful navigation of complex discussions and ability to create a collaborative environment among Council members were instrumental in the event's success. Thanks to his stewardship, the Council tackled pivotal issues, set ambitious priorities, and laid a strong foundation for future initiatives to propel the university into a thrilling new era.

"The convening of the full Council meeting is a powerful testament to MUT's triumph over significant challenges. Stable governance is not just essential; it is the cornerstone of our future. It empowers us to effectively implement strategic plans, manage resources wisely,

and proactively tackle challenges. With this solid governance structure, MUT is poised to cultivate an inspiring environment for academic excellence, research innovation, and vibrant community engagement. Furthermore, it fosters trust among all our stakeholders, from students and staff to external partners, enhancing the university's reputation and credibility," exclaimed Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, MUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, as she embraced the excitement of this pivotal moment.



A heartfelt tribute from the Vice-Chancellor

Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Mangosuthu University of Technology, recently paid tribute to her beloved mentor, Professor Doris Nzimakwe, at a touching memorial service held at St. Augustine Parish in KwaMdladla, Umlazi Township, on April 10, 2025. Professor Nzimakwe was a trailblazer in her field, having founded the Nursing department at the University of Zululand, where she once taught Professor Sibiyi.

Professor Sibiyi shared two heartfelt reasons for attending this memorial: to bid farewell to her mentor and to demonstrate that Mangosuthu University is deeply rooted in its community. "What affects our community also affects us," she stated, reflecting her belief that the University is not just an institution but an active participant in the lives of those around it.

In her warm speech in front of an audience adorned in various uniforms, including nurses, Professor Sibiyi proudly identified herself as a 'nurse.' She reflected on her special bond with Professor Nzimakwe, saying, "I am one of many who have benefited from her incredible work. She hired me to teach midwifery at Ophikweni Campus, and we championed numerous educational initiatives." It is a full-circle moment for Professor Sibiyi, as Ophikweni Campus is now part of Mangosuthu University, where she holds the esteemed position of Vice-Chancellor and Principal.

Many speakers joined Professor Sibiyi in celebrating Professor Nzimakwe's pioneering spirit. They spoke of



Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi addressing attendees at Professor Doris Nzimakwe's Memorial Service

her unwavering dedication to community development and her passion for encouraging people of all ages to pursue education. She was described as a national builder who generously used her resources to uplift both her church and the surrounding community. Most importantly, the speakers highlighted her immense love for her family and herself, which endeared her to so many.

It was a beautiful event filled with love, remembrance, and inspiration, reminding us of all the profound impact one person can have on the lives of many.



From Umlazi to Umlazi – The Inspiring Story of Nokuthula Sibiyi

Have you heard about Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi's wonderful journey? Professor Tinyiko Maluleke recently published a book, *Faces and Phases of Resilience*, which includes a fascinating chapter all about her! "From Umlazi to Umlazi—The Incredible Story of Nokuthula Sibiyi," beautifully narrates her inspiring path as the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT).

In the chapter, Professor Maluleke starts with a poetic nod to the legendary Miriam Makeba, drawing sweet parallels between her upbringing and Professor Sibiyi's. It is touching to see how Nokuthula, who grew up in Umlazi, has made the heartfelt decision to return and lead her university, reflects Professor Maluleke. This is not just about coming back; it is a meaningful way for her to give back to the community that shaped her into who she is today.

The story also briefly reflects on Professor Sibiyi's early life, especially her admiration for a local nurse named Mama Shandu. Her confidence and grace inspired young Nokuthula to dream big and pursue nursing. It is incredible to see how those early dreams have blossomed into a remarkable career, highlighting her significant contributions to nursing education and healthcare.

Of course, the chapter does not shy away from mentioning the challenges facing MUT, like governance and financial issues. Professor Maluleke thoughtfully references Jonathan Jansen's book "Corrupted" to illustrate the rugged landscape of higher education. Yet, despite these hurdles, Professor Sibiyi's appointment as Vice Chancellor shines as a ray of hope for the university.

Her leadership is transforming the student experience at MUT, which aligns with the University's vision: 'to

be a transforming, equitable, sustainable, and academically excellent University of Technology anchored in its communities'. She is set to make a lasting difference through her initiatives in youth empowerment, digital literacy, and health education. She fosters an innovative and inclusive atmosphere, ensuring students are well-equipped for the future. Her dedication to enhancing research capabilities and encouraging interdisciplinary collaborations offers students fantastic opportunities to grow and succeed.

Professor Sibiyi is not just a leader but a true beacon of inspiration for her community and the students at MUT!



Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, right, with Professor Tinyiko Maluleke

Strengthening International Collaboration: USAf Delegation Visit to Hungary

My recent trip to Hungary as part of the Universities South Africa (USAf) delegation, which took place from March 30 to April 3, 2025, marked a significant milestone in promoting international collaboration and knowledge exchange between South African and Hungarian universities.

The primary aim of our visit was to strengthen the relationship between South African universities and their Hungarian counterparts, a partnership that originated in 2019 and was revitalised post-COVID in 2023. This trip sought to formalise our collaboration and explore opportunities for mutual growth and advancement in higher education.

During the week, we participated in study tours at seven Hungarian universities, representing various institutions, including state-run, church-affiliated, private, and those managed by public interest trusts. These tours offered valuable insights into the different operating models within the Hungarian higher education system.



Professor Nokuthula Sibiya during the visit at the Hungarian Parliament

A notable highlight of our visit was the formal launch of the SA-Hungary Rectors' Forum at Semmelweis University. This forum enabled a rich exchange of information on several crucial topics, including the university systems of both nations, foreign policies regarding open collaboration, priorities and goals for internationalisation, digital technological transformation in teaching and learning, research and innovation perspectives, and the sustainability of higher education in the context of declining state subsidies.

I am optimistic that this partnership will significantly benefit MUT and our broader academic community. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to USAf, the Hungarian Rectors' Conference, and all participants for their invaluable contributions to this successful visit. Through various partnership initiatives, we are constructing bridges of knowledge and collaboration to enhance the quality and impact of higher education in South Africa.



The USAf Board, SA Representatives, and Hungarian Rector's Conference (HRC). Note: Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, standing front row, fifth from right

Exciting highlights from the SRC Leadership Workshop

This past March, from the 13th to the 15th, the stunning Salt Rock Hotel transformed into a vibrant hub of inspiration and creativity. It hosted the much-anticipated Student Representative Council (SRC) Leadership Workshop, ingeniously convened by our dynamic Vice-Chancellor and Principal. Picture this: a picturesque coastal setting filled with eager student leaders ready to unleash their potential.

The workshop started on a high note with an electrifying address from Professor Sibiya. She underscored the importance of innovative leadership strategies and deep student engagement. Her message resonated clearly: She was on a mission to equip SRC members with powerful tools and insights, enabling them to represent and champion our wonderfully diverse student body authentically.



Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, third from right, with SRC members

One of the workshop's most enthralling moments was an engaging discussion led by Professor Sibiyi herself. She dived deep into various leadership styles and their transformative impact on student governance. She inspired attendees to become catalysts for change and innovation champions, urging them to harness their creative problem-solving skills to drive long-term improvements. Her guiding words encouraged leaders to rise above immediate challenges and envision a brighter, more collaborative future.

The discussions highlighted students' multifaceted challenges, from academic pressures to financial hurdles and mental health concerns. With passion and determination, the SRC was called to advocate for comprehensive support services, including vital counselling, career guidance, and financial aid initiatives designed to uplift the student experience. Professor Sibiyi passionately reminded everyone that true student success goes far beyond academic achievements—it is about fostering personal and professional growth for every individual.

Amidst the excitement, the workshop wrapped up with a powerful list of actionable recommendations, ensuring that bold ideas do not go unturned:

- Launch regular student feedback sessions to tune into needs and concerns.
- Ignite mentorship programmes for SRC members to cultivate strong leadership skills.
- Host exciting workshops on financial literacy and strategies for academic triumph.
- Fortify partnerships with university administration to advocate passionately for student interests.
- Champion transparency and accountability in SRC governance like never before!

With Professor Sibiyi's visionary leadership, the workshop empowered our SRC members, setting the stage for them to inspire positive change and contribute meaningfully to the success of the student community and the university. This was not just a workshop but a movement towards a brighter, more inclusive future!



Welcoming the Executive Committee of the Convocation

On 20 March 2025, the Council Chamber was alive with anticipation during the induction of the Executive Committee of the Convocation. The Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi began the induction ceremony with a heartfelt welcome, acknowledging the vital role that the Convocation plays in the life of our university. She highlighted the challenges that have led to financial constraints at MUT, emphasizing the need for the Convocation Executive Committee (CONVEXCO) to collaborate in raising funds to support the university's mission.

In her address, Professor Sibiyi candidly discussed the financial hurdles that the university faces. She underscored the importance of innovative fundraising efforts and the collective responsibility of the Convocation to contribute to the economic stability and growth of MUT.



Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, seated left, with MUT staff and MUT Convocation Executive

Her call to action was clear: "Together, we can overcome these challenges and ensure a bright future for our institution." Professor Sibiyi also shared her vision for the next five years, outlining strategic goals to



enhance the university's academic excellence, research capabilities, and community engagement. Her vision is to transform MUT into a research-informed university that excels in transformative and innovative education, guided by national and global imperatives. She emphasised the importance of embedding this

vision into the core functions of teaching, learning, research, and community engagement.

The induction of the new Executive Committee marks the beginning of a collaborative journey between the university and its lifetime stakeholder group.

The exciting journey of MUT Radio

Get ready to tune in to the exhilarating world of MUT Radio—a vibrant hub that has redefined campus life since its launch on June 16, 2021! This dynamic radio station, powered entirely by enthusiastic student volunteers, has quickly become a key pillar of our university community, sparking creativity and engagement like never before.



MUT Radio staff in jubilant mood as they look forward to celebrating the MUT Radio's fourth year birthday

Initially championed by two vice-chancellors, Dr Duma Malaza and brought to life under Professor Marcus Ramogale's tutelage, the radio station has trained 300 in essential radio skills such as broadcasting, production, journalism, and technical operations. MUT Radio is not just a platform but a launchpad for future media stars. Professor Nokuthula Sibiya has dived straight into this exciting wave of success by supporting every endeavour the Radio Station is doing.

Think of the countless hours spent by these young volunteers honing their craft, building confidence, and embarking on a journey toward successful careers in the ever-evolving media landscape. But the excitement does not stop there! MUT Radio is a true powerhouse for fostering community spirit. Through engaging programmes that captivate the airwaves and lively discussions that ignite passions, the station has brought students from diverse backgrounds together, creating a vibrant environment. Whether it is music that makes you dance or thought-provoking debates that challenge perspectives, MUT Radio delivers it all—keeping our university buzzing with energy and excitement!

Unsurprisingly, the station has produced remarkable talents like Lusanda Mngayi and Sbu Lushozi, who are now shining on Gagasi FM, and Silindle Ngobese, who is making waves at Vuma FM. These success stories are a testament to MUT Radio's commitment to nurturing extraordinary talent and providing a launching pad for aspiring media professionals to realise their dreams.

MUT Radio does not just entertain; it elevates our university's engagement with the broader community. With live broadcasts of key events like the State of the University address and collaborations with local community radio stations, the station serves as a vital communication bridge. It ensures that essential messages reach a wider audience, fostering transparency, trust, and mutual support between the university and its stakeholders.

"As we celebrate the remarkable achievements of MUT Radio, we can't wait for its future growth and impact. I invite all students to dive in—whether by volunteering, sharing content, or simply tuning in to cheer on your fellow students. Be part of this thrilling journey!" said Professor Sibiya, our inspiring Vice-Chancellor and Principal.

Join the excitement at MUT Radio, where every voice matters and every story is shared! With MUT Graduation 2025 loading, be sure not to be a part of this home-grown station.

Best wishes during this Easter period!



Vice-Chancellor Professor Nokuthula Sibiya

As we dive into this wonderful season of reflection, renewal, and hope, I just wanted to take a moment to wish each of you a very Happy Easter. Easter is such a beautiful reminder of new beginnings, grace, and the incredible resilience of the human spirit. Just as spring brings warmth and rebirth, I hope this time fills your days with peace, joy, and a refreshed sense of purpose alongside your loved ones.

For those of you traveling during the Easter break, we are keeping you in our thoughts and hoping for your safe journey. Here is a lovely blessing to carry with you:

"May the road rise up to meet you, may the wind be always at your back.

**May the sun shine warm upon your face,
and rains fall soft upon your fields.**

**And until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of His hand."**

— Traditional Irish Travel Blessing

Whether you are celebrating with family, taking a break to relax, or finding a quiet moment for reflection, I hope this season brings you light and hope for all that lies ahead. Thank you for being such a valued part of the Mangosuthu University of Technology.



Let us connect again next month.

