

Celebrating **VICE-CHANCELORS** 1 YEAR IN OFFICE



**FROM THE
VC'S DESK**

**DR XOLILE
VERONICA NGUBANE**

**CA JOINS MUT
AS CFO**



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EDITORIAL



Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, left, with Rita Nzama, Executive Secretary, Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal

Thursday 1 August 2024 was a watershed day in the 45-year history of Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) as Professor Nokuthula Sibiya became its first female, and Umlazi-born Vice-Chancellor and Principal.

A year later, Professor Sibiya has made a mark at MUT with her proactive, strategic and inclusive approach – laying a strong foundation for MUT’s continued transformation in areas ranging from governance to student engagement, research performance and global positioning.

Key to this impact is Professor Sibiya’s “Business Unusual” vision, unveiled at her formal inauguration in November 2024. Underpinning this vision is her bold strategic framework referred to as “EXCEL” – Elevating academic excellence, X-Factor Innovation, Community Engagement, and Leadership for a Better Future.

We are excited to be a part of this transformative vision, led by a truly inspiring woman. On that note, we wish the VC every success going forward. We also salute each of our MUT women this Women’s Month!

FROM THE VC'S DESK



Visionary - Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi

“Throughout my year in office, I have been preoccupied with how I could make an impact in this monumental task bestowed upon me. At the back of my mind has been this quest to keep my promise of EXCEL. Let me provide a few highlights on my pursuit of EXCEL and what this EXCEL journey has entailed at MUT.”

MUT EXCEL: LEADERSHIP FOR A BETTER FUTURE (THE 'L')



MUT Council Chairperson, Dr Mosidi Makgae

While there have been a few resignations at the executive level, I wish to pay tribute to colleagues who have stepped up to hold the fort and moved at the same pace as the organisation we are building together. We continued to strive and raise the bar. Thank you to all members of the MUT community who have enabled us to move forward despite obstacles.

On governance issues, I am pleased that we have a fully constituted MUT Council, led by two women, Dr Mosidi Makgae and Ms Conny Mametja, who bring vast experience in corporate leadership and governance. The Council itself has hit the ground running and is committed to

strengthening MUT governance, which is a key step for MUT's upward trajectory.

We are progressing well with the development of MUT Strategy 2026–2030, and have been engaging key stakeholders across campus. We have started a campaign that draws attention to this effort. The “Next level MUT” is a silent campaign that encourages all connected to MUT to start reflecting on Vision 2030. At the same time, we are revisiting the MUT organisational structure to ensure that our strategy is fit for purpose and is underpinned by a structure that supports relevance, agility and execution.



Some of the MUT men outside the conference venue

On another front, I am pleased to acknowledge the support from NEHAWU, MUT's organised labour, for the peaceful salary negotiations and the decorum maintained during those discussions, despite the stringent austerity measures that we and all universities face.

I have been described as "a nurse for life", a description that I embrace wholeheartedly. This background make it easy for me to identify with the wellbeing of our employees. This background qualification says to me duty of care is paramount. To this end, we are introducing performance management system (PMS). I have committed to senior management that I would like to explore other forms of rewards as we start piloting our PMS next year with Grades 1-4.

Another development at our Institution is the continuation of a giant step that MUT staff took last year. Our Gender Forum, inaugurated last year, has developed various programmes, including the Men's Conference event, hosted at the beginning of this year – a testament to our willingness to treat everyone equitably, regardless of gender.

I am also happy that we have received an unqualified (clean) audit report for the 2024 fiscal year, reinforcing our institutional credibility.

We have appointed the following new senior managers who are commencing duty in August 2025:

DR KAREN LAZENBY HAS BEEN APPOINTED AS OUR NEW REGISTRAR



MUT Registrar, Dr Karen Lazenby

Dr Lazenby is an accomplished leader in higher education with 30 years of experience, including 20 years in senior management roles. Dr Lazenby has expertise in managing the student lifecycle, academic administration, compliance and digital transformation. Most recently, she served as Deputy Registrar at the Durban University of Technology, overseeing academic administration and governance, as well as leading a major student information system migration. Previously, as Academic Registrar at the University of the Free State, Dr Lazenby oversaw student recruitment and academic services, ensuring compliance with legislative requirements and leading various governance committees.

At the University of Pretoria, Dr Lazenby was the

Director of the Client Service Centre for 14 years, responsible for student lifecycle management and compliance. She previously held roles in education technology and institutional research, with her early career including positions at the Vaal Triangle Technikon and Technikon SA. Dr Lazenby holds a BA and BA Honours from Potchefstroom University, a Diploma in Tertiary Education, an MEd in Computer Assisted Education, a PhD in Computer Integrated Education from the University of Pretoria, and an Executive MBA from the University of Cape Town. She has published numerous papers in accredited journals, and presented at international conferences.

DR XOLILE VERONICA NGUBANE



Dr Xolile Veronica Ngubane

Dr Xolile Veronica Ngubane has been appointed as senior director in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal. Dr Ngubane commenced her new duties on 1 August 2025.

Dr Ngubane, who recently obtained her PhD, has been Acting Director of the Technology Station in Chemicals (TSC), which provides support to SMMEs in the chemical and related sectors. Dr Ngubane – who also holds an MBA (2017) and MSc in Chemistry (2006) from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) – has recently completed her PhD in Economic and Management Sciences from the North West University Business School, with a focus on Business Administration.

A former HOD of Analytical Chemistry at MUT (1999-2003) and lecturer in Inorganic and

Analytical Chemistry (1994-2003), she has spent over 20 years supporting SMMEs through knowledge and technology transfer, aided by her certification in Project Management and Administration, and Operations Management.

Her role ensured that processes were streamlined, resulting in improved organisational efficiencies and resource utilisation that achieved strategic goals, while also enhancing quality and maintaining a competitive edge. Dr Ngubane has participated in national and international engagements and study tours in Germany, the United Kingdom, India, the United States, Singapore and France. She is currently part of the team developing raw materials to reduce the cosmetic sector's dependency on imported raw materials.

CA JOINS MUT AS CFO



Bulelani Mahlangu

Bulelani Mahlangu, a Chartered Accountant and member of SAICA, is a seasoned executive with over 16 years of experience in financial management. Mahlangu, like Dr Ngubane, commenced his duties on 1 August 2025 in the Department of Finance as a Chief Financial Officer (CFO). Previously, he was Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

Mahlangu's expertise lies in areas such as corporate and financial strategy development, organisational design, debt restructuring, and process restructuring. Mahlangu's extensive experience at a senior level has enabled him to exercise leadership and contribute beyond the confines of finance. He has been appointed as a

finance expert by three different assessors for the DHET, which has deepened his appreciation for the higher education sector.

He is also experienced in the governance of state entities, having been the chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committees of both the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Mahlangu obtained his undergraduate and postgraduate diplomas from the University of Cape Town and his Master's degree from the University of London.

Colleagues, join me in welcoming our new senior managers, including Dr Lazenby, who will join us next month.

MUT EXCEL: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT (THE 'CE')



Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi

This year we finalised the purchase of a property across the road from MUT's main campus, adjacent to our North Campus. The property holds much potential for MUT, and we hope to unveil plans of how it may add value to us soon. As we prepare to officially receive this property, we also acknowledge that significant stakeholder engagement with our neighbours is necessary. We are strengthening our relations with our neighbours so they may see that we have their interests at heart. What is MUT doing to strengthen its relationship with these immediate neighbours?

Through the Community Engagement conference being planned for 2026, I am hopeful that our position as a University committed to making a difference in the lives of the people of Umlazi Township will be clearly articulated. On this note, I am convinced that our efforts to make a difference in our communities are already bearing fruit. For instance, the lives of some learners from local high schools changed for the better after they took part in the WIPO Summer School and IP and Technology Transfer that we hosted last year.

On the student front, it is essential to note my intention to make students the centre of everything we do. As VC and Principal, I ensured that I was part of their strategic planning so that I could understand what it would take for all of us to produce a dynamic student whose experience at MUT is positive throughout their stay.

I will soon be leading a delegation of MUT students to some overseas institutions to engage and compete with peers from around the world. Three IT students will participate in a Hackathon at Millat Umid University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. This event is a result of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in February 2025 with 13 universities from Africa and Asia. During the Hackathon, which takes place from 20-22 August 2025, our students will present a project focused on innovative healthcare solutions. The event provides a global platform for students to develop technology-based solutions to real-world problems, particularly in healthcare. This initiative directly aligns with MUT's strategic priorities of fostering innovation, international collaboration and experiential learning.

MUT EXCEL: ELEVATING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE (THE 'E')



From left, Nonhlanhla Magagula Head of Absa's Corporate Citizenship Programmes; Dr Edwell Gumbo, Director: Entrepreneurship, Universities South Africa (USAf); Dr Phethiwe Matutu, Chief Executive Officer, Universities South Africa (USAf); Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, MUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal; and Dr Kevin Ramsarghey, Dean of the Faculty of Management Sciences at MUT

I am grateful to the Teaching and Learning portfolio for its unrelenting efforts to enhance our academic outcomes.

A few recent highlights:

- A rise in Engineering graduation rates from 15% (2023) to 20% (2024).
- Introduction of Advanced Diploma programmes.
- A steady increase in the number of PhD-qualified staff.
- Achievement of strong Work-Integrated Learning placements – 100% placement in Management Sciences and 89% in Health and Applied Sciences.
- A strong focus on entrepreneurship development.

I am reminded that last month, the Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE), in partnership with ABSA, launched the EDHE-ABSA Innovation Challenge, along with the official announcement of the Universities South Africa (USAf) partnership. This event was attended by all the universities in KwaZulu-Natal, and the USAf CEO, Dr Phethiwe Matutu. The message was clear, that MUT students are ready to scoop more entrepreneurship awards.

MUT EXCEL: X-FACTOR INNOVATION (THE 'X')



Dr Anette Mienie has guided the Research directorate for 25 years

With the Research Office celebrating its silver jubilee, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to all those that have championed the research agenda and made invaluable contributions to it. It would be remiss of me not to mention that our research output is growing, although researcher attrition tends to set us back at times.

ENHANCING OUR INSTITUTIONAL POSITIONING



Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, middle, with the MUT delegation and their US counterparts during the recent visit to the United States

We have initiated international collaborations, including a pivotal global engagement visit to Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) and to California State University, Sacramento (Sac State), marking a step toward shaping MUT as a globally-networked connected University that is committed to social impact.

These collaborations will see SUNO and other universities participate in the Empowered Administrators Conference (EAC) in 2025, whose theme is “Revolutionising Office Support for a Smarter Future”. I am excited that this year’s EAC is attracting delegates from some of our top universities who will be participating in the EAC for the first time. The power of global engagements cannot be overstated. I am also happy to announce that we will host the President from Sac State before the end of the year to discuss an Artificial Intelligence summit that MUT will host next year with universities from the USA, Germany and most of our partners across

Africa, south-eastern Asia, Europe and of course the USA.

I am also heartened that MUT has been chosen among 26 universities in South Africa to lead a programme funded by the German Academic Exchange Service, DAAD, to train office professionals in universities’ internationalisation offices. It is an honour for our own leaders to be recognised, on a global level, as being fit for training in such an esteemed programme that brings together researchers, administrators and academics from Africa, Latin America and south-eastern Asia. It is also heartening that the team’s project, pitched at a high level, received the number two spot during the lead-up competition.

All the efforts listed above give inspiration to those with qualifications bearing the MUT name that their future is bright. So much has been done, and I wish to say to all of you: “Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu”. Thank you for welcoming me as your VC – I am humbled.



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