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### Happy Heritage Month MUT Family!



MUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, adorned in traditional attire to honor Heritage Month

walking alongside you—listening, learning, and leading with purpose. I have witnessed the resilience of our students, the dedication of our staff, and the deep cultural pride that runs through the heart of MUT. These experiences have affirmed what I knew from the beginning: that MUT is not just a university, but a living legacy of transformation.

Heritage Month invites us to honour the stories that shaped us and the values that guide us. It reminds us that our diversity is not a challenge to overcome, but a strength to embrace. At MUT, we celebrate heritage not only through language, music, and tradition—but through our commitment to inclusive education, community upliftment, and innovation rooted in African excellence.

This vision is at the core of our MUT Strategy 2025. Through our anchor strategy, we are deepening our engagement with Umlazi and surrounding communities, ensuring that our academic work responds to real-world needs. We are investing in student success, staff development, and institutional transformation—because we know that heritage is not static; it evolves through the choices we make today.

As we celebrate Heritage Month, I encourage each of you to reflect on your own journey. Thank you for walking this path with me. “As we shape the future of MUT, let us remember that *libunjwa liseva*—we must guide and nurture while the clay is still soft. Our students are the leaders of tomorrow, and our collective wisdom will light their path.” – Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, Vice-Chancellor and Principal.

“This Heritage Month carries special meaning—not only for our nation, but for me personally, as I mark one year in office as Vice-Chancellor of Mangosuthu University of Technology.

Over the past twelve months, I have had the privilege of



## State of the University Address



Ukwethulwa kweSimo seNyuvesi

# SOTU 2025



## SAVE THE DATE



29 KuMandulo 2025



10am – 1pm



Student Centre

**UMphathi weNyuvesi umema abasebenzi nabafundi ukuzolalela inkulumo yakhe ngesimo seNyuvesi sango-2025 (SOTU)**

USolwazi uNokuthula Sibiya, iSekela-Shansela, ophinde abe wuThishanhloko waseNyuvesi yezobuChwepheshe iMangosuthu (MUT), umema bonke abasebenzi nabafundi ukuba beze kothamela inkulumo azoyethula ngesimo seNyuvesi (SOTU) kulonyaka. Kulomhlangano, abanye abaPhathi abasesiGungwini esiPhezulu esiphethe bazokhuluma kabanzi ngezingxenywe abaziphethe, futhi baveze izinhlelo zabo ngekusasa leNyuvesi.

Ukuba khona kwenu kubalulekile kakhulu njengoba kuzobhekwa inqubekelaphambili yeNyuvesi, kuphinde kubhekwe okwenzekayo, nempumelelo ye-MUT.

**Xhumana noJade Mthiyane ngeminye imininingwane:  
mthiyanej@mut.ac.za | 060 753 2476**

"I am honoured to invite our community to the 2025 State of the University Address, which I will deliver on Friday, 29 September, from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Bozzoli Hall. This occasion marks a full year since I assumed office, and it offers us a vital opportunity to reflect on our shared journey. I will share key developments under our Strategy 2025,

highlight the progress we've made in transforming our institution, and outline the path ahead as we continue to anchor excellence in Umlazi and beyond. I encourage every staff member and student to attend, engage, and be part of this important dialogue."- Professor Nokuthula Sibiya



## MUT Vice-Chancellor honoured with prestigious Gagasi FM SHERO Award



A SHERO among us, MUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi

MUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi's career is a tapestry of groundbreaking achievements, visionary leadership, and dedication to education. In a momentous celebration of leadership, resilience, and excellence, on Saturday, 23 August 2025, the MUT Vice-Chancellor was awarded the 2025 Gagasi FM SHERO Award, a distinction reserved for KwaZulu-Natal's most inspiring women.

The SHERO Awards, held annually during Women's Month, shine a spotlight on women who are breaking barriers and making extraordinary contributions to their communities and professions. Professor Sibiyi joins a distinguished group of honourees recognised for their impact across education, science, public service, and beyond.

Professor Sibiyi, the first female Vice-Chancellor in MUT's

history, has long been a trailblazer in higher education. Since assuming leadership at MUT, Professor Sibiyi has ushered in a new era of strategic growth and academic innovation. She spearheaded the development of MUT's 2026–2031 strategy, which prioritises academic excellence, financial sustainability, and community engagement. Her vision has expanded the university's research footprint, strengthened student support systems, and deepened partnerships both locally and internationally.

But perhaps the most profound impact of her leadership has been felt by the students themselves. Professor Sibiyi's commitment to empowering young people is woven into every initiative she leads. Through her EXCEL framework and "Business Unusual" approach, she has cultivated a campus culture that encourages innovation, leadership, and social responsibility.

This vision was vividly demonstrated at the 2025 International Young Innovate Hackathon in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where MUT's student team, CODENEXUS, emerged as the overall champions. Their AI-powered healthcare solution, designed to bridge rural healthcare gaps in South Africa, impressed international judges and venture capitalists alike. The team's participation and victory were made possible by Professor Sibiyi's unwavering support. Her mentorship of the Student Representative Council (SRC) has also been transformative, promoting democratic leadership and strategic thinking.

Receiving the news about her SHERO award from Dr Ntabiseng Mosala-Bryant, Senior Director: Library Services who collected the award on behalf of the VC who was away on international engagements, Professor Sibiyi reflected as follows: "This award is not just mine; it belongs to every woman who dares to lead, every student who dreams beyond circumstance, and every colleague who believes in the power of education to transform lives."

The university community has responded with admiration. Staff, students, and alumni lauded Professor Sibiyi's recognition as a reflection of MUT's growing influence. As MUT continues to shape the future of education in South Africa, Professor Sibiyi's SHERO Award serves as a powerful reminder that leadership rooted in purpose can inspire generations. Congratulations, Professor Sibiyi, our SHERO, our leader, our pride!



A victory for all at MUT, staff celebrate the VC's achievements



A victory for all at MUT, staff celebrate the VC's achievements

## Two leaders, one vision - innovation without borders



Professor Dinara Ishmanova, Millat Umidi University Rector, left, with MUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiya

In a moment that bridged continents and cultures, Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, Vice-Chancellor of Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), met with Professor Dinara Ishmanova, Rector of Millat Umidi University, during the opening ceremony of the International Young Innovate Hackathon held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on 20 August 2025.

The meeting marked a symbolic convergence of two visionary leaders, one from the heart of Umlazi township in South Africa, the other from the historic city of Tashkent in Uzbekistan. Both are driven by a shared commitment to academic excellence, entrepreneurship, and youth empowerment.

Hosted under the banner of the University Incubator Consortium (UNIIC), the Hackathon brought together student teams from South Africa, Uzbekistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines to tackle global challenges through technology and design thinking. Upon signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU), Professors Sibiya and Ishmanova emphasised the critical role of universities in cultivating not only knowledge, but bold, entrepreneurial mindsets.

“Our institutions may be worlds apart, but our mission is the same,” said Professor Ishmanova. “We are here to ignite the spirit of innovation in our students to equip them to create jobs.”

Professor Sibiya echoed the sentiment, highlighting the importance of cross-cultural collaboration in solving complex problems. “Innovation thrives when diverse minds meet. This Hackathon is a testament to what young people can achieve when given the tools and trust to lead.”

The two leaders discussed potential academic exchanges, joint research initiatives, and the possibility of a future Africa–Central Asia Innovation Summit. Their dialogue reflected the ethos of MUT’s Strategy 2025, which positions the university as an anchor institution that is deeply rooted in Umlazi, yet globally engaged.

But the highlight of the event came as the Hackathon concluded—with MUT students emerging as the overall champions, impressing judges with their AI-powered platform designed to improve access to health support in underserved communities. Their solution combined cultural sensitivity, mobile accessibility, and data-driven insights, earning praise for both technical excellence and social impact.

As the Hackathon ended, students from MUT, Millat Umidi University, AJOU University, Asia Pacific University, University of Mpumalanga, Universitas Trisakti, and Universitas Telkom stood side by side, not as competitors, but as collaborators in a global movement for change. Their success was a powerful reminder that while geography may divide us, vision can unite us.



Dr Vikash Jugoo, HOD:ICT at MUT with the two leaders

SOUTH AFRICA  
**HAPPY**  
HERITAGE  
24 SEPT DAY

A graphic celebrating South African Heritage Day. It features the South African flag's colors (green, white, red, blue, yellow, black) in a stylized, overlapping shape. Above the flag are several small hearts in red, yellow, and blue. The text 'SOUTH AFRICA' is in red, 'HAPPY' is in large blue letters, 'HERITAGE' is in black with a small satellite dish icon over the 'T', and '24 SEPT DAY' is in white on a red rounded rectangle and green letters respectively. The background is a light beige with faint silhouettes of people.

## A Victory That Speaks to the Heart: MUT Vice-Chancellor Reflects on Hackathon Triumph



MUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, seated, right, with Team CODENEXUS, the Hackathon Champions



An emotional moment as MUT is announced Champions of the hackathon

When Team CODENEXUS from Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) was announced as the winner of the 2025 International Young Innovate Hackathon in Tashkent, the applause was not just for their technical brilliance, it

was for a deeper story of vision, resilience, and personal connection.

For MUT Vice-Chancellor Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, who witnessed the moment firsthand, the win was more than a proud institutional milestone. It was a deeply personal affirmation of the university's direction—and of her own academic journey.

The students' project, an AI-powered multilingual health-care platform designed to improve access in rural communities, resonated powerfully with Professor Sibiya's long-standing research interests in public health and maternal health. "It felt like the students were giving voice to the very issues I've spent years trying to address," she reflected. "Their innovation wasn't just smart; it was socially conscious, culturally grounded, and urgently needed." The Hackathon, co-hosted at Millat Umidi, and AJOU University in Uzbekistan, brought together student teams from across Asia and Africa. MUT's participation was made possible through its recent membership in the University Incubator Consortium, a strategic move championed by Professor Sibiya to position MUT on global innovation platforms.

Team CODENEXUS—made up of Nkazimulo Nene, Senzwa Jongihlathi, and Yudi Ramanand stood out not only for their technical execution, but for their ability to connect innovation with lived realities. Their solution was praised by judges and venture capitalists alike for its potential to transform healthcare delivery.

## MUT Vice-Chancellor Champions Women-Led Solutions at Global Energy-Water-Food-Climate Summit



Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi delivering her keynote address at the EWFC Summit in Hungary

In a powerful keynote address delivered at the Energy-Water-Food-Climate (EWFC) Nexus Summit in Hungary, Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, Vice-Chancellor of Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), called for a radical reimagining of Africa's development trajectory—one led by women and rooted in sustainability, equity, and scientific innovation.

Speaking to an international audience of researchers, policymakers, and climate strategists, Professor Sibiyi presented a research-informed framework that positions women's leadership at the heart of solving interconnected challenges across energy, water, food systems, and climate resilience. Her address, titled "Advancing Women-Led Pathways Toward an Africa Devoid of Unemployment, Hunger, Climate Risks, and Inadequate Human Settlements," drew on empirical data, global development goals, and decades of advocacy.

"Africa's liberation will not come from external saviours," she declared. "It must be driven by the agency and leader-

ship of its women—especially those in rural and township communities who are already at the frontlines of adaptation and survival."

Professor Sibiyi's contribution to the EWFC Nexus was both visionary and pragmatic. She proposed a five-pillar framework that integrates labour law reform, green economy skills development, sustainable food systems, climate adaptation, and participatory urban planning. Each pillar is designed to address systemic inequalities while unlocking inclusive growth.

In the energy domain, she advocated for scaling training programs in clean energy and natural resource management, particularly for women and youth. She emphasised the need for labour-intensive, low-carbon technologies that reduce emissions while creating jobs—especially in townships where unemployment exceeds 60%.

On food systems, Professor Sibiyi called for the revitalisation of indigenous agriculture, the empowerment of women farmers, and the reframing of food as both a human right and cultural asset. "Colonial disruption of our food systems must be reversed," she said. "We must reclaim our seeds, our soil, and our sovereignty."

Her climate strategy focused on embedding adaptation planning into agriculture, infrastructure, and education systems. She urged African nations to fast-track climate resilience programs with women leading design and implementation, ensuring locally grounded and inclusive solutions.

Professor Sibiyi also addressed the urgent need for dignified human settlements, proposing the use of digital tools for climate mapping, flood alerts, and infrastructure optimisation. She championed participatory urban governance, where women are central to planning and execution.

Her address aligned with multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 7 (Clean Energy), and SDG 13 (Climate Action), as well as Agenda 2063's aspirations for people-driven development and continental unity.

The Vice-Chancellor's presence at the summit not only elevated MUT's global profile but also reinforced her reputation as a thought leader in climate justice, gender equity, and sustainable development. Her message was clear: Africa's future depends on empowering its women to lead the transformation of its energy, water, food, and climate systems.

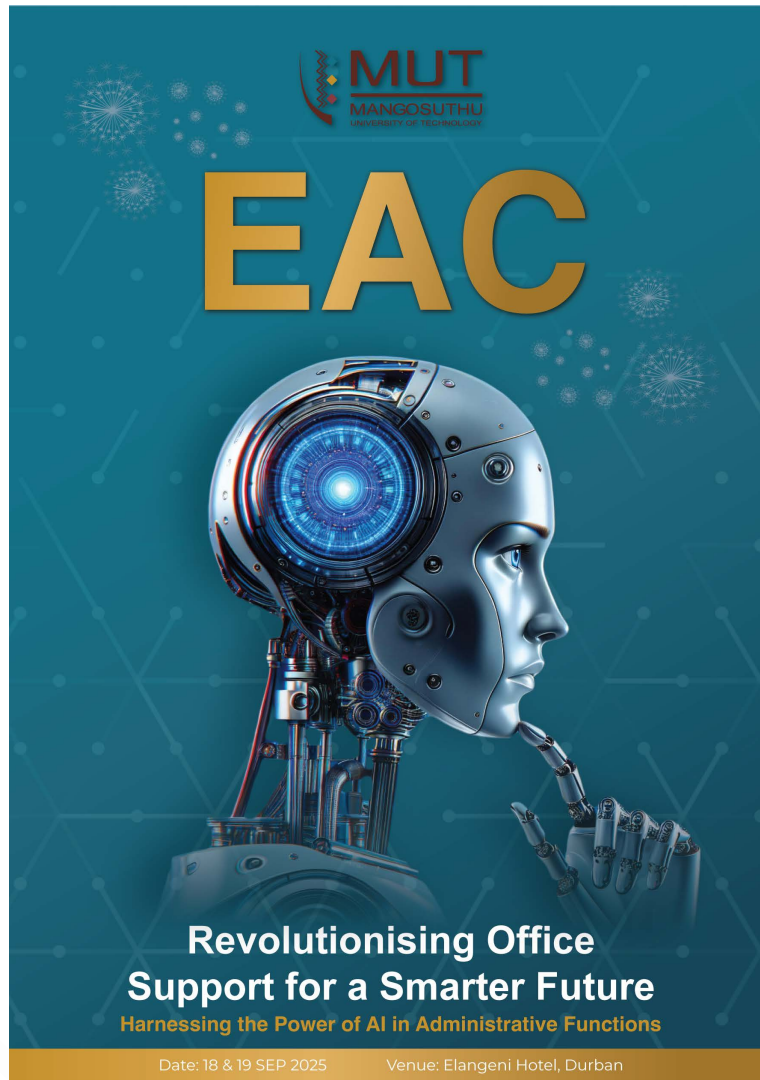




Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, third from left, with NEXUS board members at the Summit



## Unsung architects of excellence: EAC puts Admin Professionals in the spotlight



MUT is proud to host the Empowered Administrators Conference (EAC) on 18–19 September, a landmark event that brings together administrative professionals from across South Africa to share insights, strengthen leadership, and celebrate the transformative role of support staff in higher education.

Held under the theme “Harnessing the Power of AI in Administrative Support”, the conference features masterclasses and presentations focused on strategic administration, emotional intelligence, and the evolving role of administrators in shaping organisational success.

In a message shared ahead of the opening, MUT Vice-Chancellor Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi extended her best wishes to all participants, emphasising the critical role administrators play in the university’s transformation journey.

“This gathering is more than a professional event—it is a celebration of the vital role administrators play in shaping the soul and success of our institutions,” said Professor Sibiyi.

The conference is expecting delegations from higher education institutions across KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Free State, Eastern Cape, Western Cape, and Northern Cape, reflecting a remarkable diversity of voices and experiences. This national representation underscores the growing impact of the conference in positioning MUT as a thought leader within the higher education sector, the broader public sector, and the national innovation landscape.

Professor Sibiyi, who recently marked her first year in office, has championed a leadership style grounded in empowerment. Her message to delegates reflected a deep appreciation for the behind-the-scenes work that enables academic and operational success.