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VC NEWSLETTER

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VC's news round-up



Professor Nokuthula Sibiya

It is an honour to engage with you during this significant month, which not only marks my birthday but also celebrates the birthdays of Professor Marcus Ramogale and Gugu Madlala, Head of Residences. I extend warm birthday wishes to all individuals born in October. This occasion prompts us to reflect on the invaluable gift of life and to express gratitude for the numerous positive developments occurring at the Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT).

As an avid reader of the Good News Friday (GnF) newsletter, I am consistently impressed by the strides made by our colleagues in various domains. I extend my congratulations to all award recipients in research and community engagement, as well as to the Research, Innovation, and Engagement (RIE) community for their collaborative efforts during the recent award celebrations. This exemplifies a commendable spirit of teamwork, which is fundamental to our collective success.

Additionally, I would like to recognise our student leaders from diverse backgrounds for their exemplary maturity in guiding their peers in the electoral process. Their ability to mobilise fellow students in support of democratic values reflects the deep-seated principles our country upholds. As the executive, we have a vested interest in fostering youth participation in elections, and we anticipate that the Student Representative Council (SRC) elections will provide a valuable opportunity for all students to actively engage in the voting process. Over to you, newly elected SRC President Mdumiseni Chonco, Gambushe, Shay'imamba, Nyongande ziy'emhlabulweni, Mabhala ngozipho abanye bebhala ngamapensela, Wen'ohlab'inkomo wathi iyagxuga ... The advancement of our student body is in your hands. Be a good leader, as this will shape your future leadership skills.

Finally, colleagues, I am deeply appreciative of the unwavering support I receive from the executive team, senior managers, and staff members, which underscores a collective desire for shared success. Together, let us navigate the path toward realising our Vision 2030 ambitions.

MUT Strategic Planning Lekgotla 2025: Crafting the future with purpose and vision



Dr Liile Lekena-Bayaga

From 10 to 12 September 2025, Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) hosted its flagship Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Planning Workshop – Lekgotla 2025 – at the Hilton Garden Inn, Umhlanga Arch. This pivotal gathering brought together executive and senior leadership to shape the 2026 Annual Performance Plan (APP) and lay the foundation for the Institutional Operational Plan (IOP), marking the first planning cycle under MUT's newly proposed 2026–2030 Strategic Plan. The theme of the Lekgotla was clear and compelling: "intentional alignment between institutional vision and actionable plans."

The workshop opened with a series of reflective sessions that examined the 2020–2025 strategic cycle. Executives engaged in candid dialogue, sharing insights into planning, implementation, and evaluation, all grounded in audited data presented by the Directorate of Institutional Planning and Research (DIPR). These reflections showed both the

achievements and the strategic blind spots that must be addressed going forward. As Dr Liile Lekena-Bayaga, acting Senior Director of DIPR, aptly stated, "Strategy is not a document; it is a commitment to delivery. And delivery starts with honest self-reflection."

Despite the ambitious scope of the workshop, the leadership team completed the first full draft of the 2026 APP. The IOP was introduced conceptually, with further input and synthesis scheduled for a follow-up session. This deliberate pacing reflects MUT's commitment to rigorous, inclusive planning. Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, captured the spirit of the moment when she said, "We're not just writing plans; we're writing the future of MUT. This is our moment to own it boldly, together."

The 2026 APP represents the first operational expression of MUT's new strategic direction. It aligns

institutional intent with national priorities, global trends, and the unique rhythm of MUT. The plan sets out ambitious goals across governance, academic excellence, financial sustainability, digital transformation, and strategic partnerships. These goals were shaped through robust engagement and reflect MUT's commitment to ethical leadership, student success, innovation, and community impact. One of the most inspiring moments of the Lekgotla came when Dr Annette Mienie, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Engagement, generously volunteered to sponsor a dedicated two-day follow-up workshop to finalise the IOP. Scheduled for 28–29 October 2025, this session will enable the DIPR to refine technical indicators and provide faculties and divisions with the opportunity to enhance their operational contributions. This gesture exemplifies the spirit of a forward-looking Executive Management Committee.

The Lekgotla concluded with a sense of clarity, accomplishment, and shared ownership. The work done during these three days will directly influence budget allocations, divisional planning, and institutional performance in 2026, the crucial launch year for the new strategy. As MUT journeys into its new strategic cycle, the spirit of the Lekgotla reflects the institution's renewed commitment to its core values which are: Mastery, Yearning for Growth, Mutual Respect, Ubuntu, and Transparency. These MY MUT values were not only guiding lights for the future but were deeply present in the way this planning process was led: collaboratively, reflectively, and with purpose.

The 2025 Lekgotla was more than a planning exercise; it reflected an MUT that is bold in its vision, grounded in its values, and committed to shaping a future that reflects the aspirations of its community and the promise of higher education in South Africa.



MUT staff at the Lekgotla

MUT–PAX College MoU signals bold vision for student success and national development



After signing the agreement - seated are MUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, left and, also seated, Brenda Govender, CEO and Co-Founder of PAX. Standing, from left, Professor Alfred Msomi, Dean: Faculty of Applied and Health Sciences; Dr Xolile Ngubane, Senior Director: Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal; Dr Daniel Krupanandan, PAX Advisory Committee; Dr Nivan Nayager - Senior Lecturer and member on PAX Advisory Committee; Dr Phiwayinkosi Gumede, Director: Quality Management Directorate at MUT; and, Zandile Khumalo, Acting Director for TVETs, DHET

On 3 October 2025, Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) marked a pivotal moment in its institutional journey by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with PAX College under the theme “Partners for Peace.” The event hosted at PAX College demonstrated MUT’s commitment to stakeholder engagement, educational transformation, and brand leadership in South Africa’s post-school education landscape.

At the heart of the occasion was MUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, whose address on “Partnering for Impact: Strategic Partnerships for Student Success and National Development” set the tone for a future-oriented collaboration. Her message was clear: MUT is not merely participating in partnerships, it is shaping them to drive systemic change.

“Increasingly, in South Africa and in Higher Education especially, we see the need for partnership and

collaboration: whether in research, teaching and learning, or community-driven efforts. We cannot go it alone. Together we can achieve more, in our local communities, region, and nationally,” Professor Sibiyi affirmed.

Her remarks underscored MUT’s strategic positioning as a catalyst for inclusive growth, innovation, and youth empowerment. By aligning with PAX College, a respected FET/TVET institution with a legacy of accessibility and student-centred learning, MUT is actively dismantling silos between technical and academic education. The partnership offers students seamless articulation pathways from vocational training into degree programmes, postgraduate studies, and meaningful careers.

The Vice-Chancellor’s presence was complemented by key voices, including Ms Zandile Khumalo from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), who praised MUT’s proactive role in

fostering employability and expanding access. PAX College Co-Founder Mrs Brenda Govender and Advisory Committee Member Dr Daniel echoed the significance of the partnership, citing that the partnership is aligned with national skills development and employability objectives.

Professor Sibiya's emphasis on "real opportunities for students" and "partnering for impact at the individual level" reinforced MUT's brand identity as a university deeply invested in student success and community

upliftment. Her articulation of the value that TVET colleges bring through practical training, accreditation, and mobility positions MUT as a forward-thinking institution that embraces diversity in educational models.

The signing ceremony concluded with warm congratulations and renewed commitment from both institutions. Under Professor Sibiya's stewardship, MUT continues to build bridges and lead with purpose.



Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, MUT; and Dr Nivan Nayager - Senior Lecturer and member on PAX Advisory Committee, at the event

MUT Vice-Chancellor positions universities as a catalyst for entrepreneurial sustainability at EDHE Gala Dinner



MUT VC and Principal, Nokuthula Sibiya, right, and Deputy Minister: Department of Higher Education and Training, Nomusa Dube-Ncube

At the 2025 Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) gala dinner, held on 8 October 2025, during the flagship EDHE Lekgotla and Studentpreneurs Indaba hosted by the University of South Africa (UNISA), Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), delivered a visionary welcome address that reaffirmed MUT's role as a thought leader in entrepreneurial education and sustainable development.

Speaking to a distinguished audience of Vice-Chancellors, government officials, international delegates, and industry partners, Professor Sibiya emphasised the transformative power of universities in building vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystems. Her message aligned seamlessly with the conference theme, "Entrepreneurship for Sustainability," and the broader goals of the EDHE programme, which seeks to activate student entrepreneurship, embed entrepreneurial thinking in academia, and develop universities as innovation-driven ecosystems.

"Entrepreneurship holds immense potential for sustainability and economic growth by fostering innovation, job creation, and addressing societal challenges through responsible and sustainable business models," Professor Sibiya affirmed.

Professor Sibiya's address highlighted MUT's strategic commitment to embedding entrepreneurship across teaching, research, and community engagement. She positioned MUT not only as a participant in the EDHE movement but as a proactive driver of change, one that is shaping resilient, future-ready graduates and contributing to inclusive economic growth.

Her remarks echoed the EDHE Concept Note's assertion that universities are central to building competitive economies through knowledge production, skills development, and the cultivation of critical citizenry. The EDHE Lekgotla and Studentpreneurs Indaba, now in their 8th and 7th editions respectively, serve as dynamic platforms for dialogue, collaboration, and innovation. With over 700 participants, including students, academics, and ecosystem enablers, the event showcased experiential learning activities, design thinking workshops, startup quests, and parallel sessions on AI, green economies, and entrepreneurial universities.

Professor Sibiya praised the evolution of EDHE from a coordination effort into a national movement, driven by Communities of Practice (CoPs) and supported by strategic partners such as Absa, Standard Bank, Momentum Foundation, SAB Foundation, and the British Council. She acknowledged the leadership of Universities South Africa (USAf) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), noting that the programme enjoys full endorsement from South Africa's Vice-Chancellors.

"Tonight, we celebrate South Africa's growing network of entrepreneurial universities with each one shaping a more innovative and opportunity-driven future. As the EDHE movement continues to grow, MUT stands firmly at the forefront, partnering for progress and championing a future where universities are not just places of learning but engines of sustainable development," she concluded.

MUT Welcomes new SRC leadership



Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, right, and SRC President, Mdumiseni Chonco

On 30 September 2025, Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) inaugurated its new Student Representative Council (SRC) for the 2025/2026 academic year in a ceremony filled with pride, reflection, and renewed purpose. Held at the Student Centre, the event marked a pivotal moment in MUT's democratic tradition and student governance.

Lindo Khoza, Chief Electoral Officer from Lindbong Development, praised the peaceful and well-run election held on 18 September. With voter turnout rising to 45%, Khoza commended the political maturity and tolerance displayed by student formations. He emphasised that MUT remains a national example of contested yet respectful student elections, where institutional interests are placed above factional politics. Khoza reminded the incoming SRC that their mandate now extends beyond their formations as they represent the entire student body and must lead with unity and responsibility.

In his inaugural address, newly elected SRC President Mdumiseni Chonco delivered a powerful message rooted in MUT's legacy and the spirit of servant leadership:

"Mangosuthu University of Technology is not just a place of learning. MUT carries a deep and rich history. It has stood as a beacon of hope, attracting students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds and has been a vessel for social mobility and transformation."

Chonco called on all stakeholders to remain mindful of this history in every decision made, ensuring that student needs, struggles, and aspirations remain central. He pledged to convene urgent meetings to address transport and timetable issues, and committed to prioritising academic support, financial aid, and sports bursaries. "Leadership is not for us alone," he said. "It is for every student who walks the halls of MUT. I pledge to serve with integrity, respect, and unwavering commitment."

Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, offered heartfelt reflections and guidance to both outgoing and incoming SRC members. She commended the outgoing council for their role in navigating institutional challenges with shared accountability and expressed confidence in the new SRC's ability to build on that foundation.

"You have been chosen because your peers have faith in you," Professor Sibiya said. "This is a momentous achievement but also a reminder to act with humility and to represent all students, including those who may not have voted for you."

Professor Sibiya is committed to providing leadership mentorship to the new SRC, requesting the Dean of Students, Dr Paulette Naidoo, to coordinate regular engagements. "I will sit with the SRC," she affirmed, "to ensure that leadership is not only practiced, but nurtured."

As MUT enters this new chapter of student leadership, the values of mastery and ubuntu will be

essential in shaping a thriving academic environment. When student leaders embrace inclusivity and work collaboratively with peers, staff, and management, they foster a culture of trust, respect, and shared purpose. This climate enhances learning by reducing conflict, encouraging dialogue, and ensuring that diverse student voices are heard and valued.

Cooperative leadership also strengthens student life, creating space for innovation, wellness, and community building. Whether addressing transport challenges, academic support, or campus safety, a united SRC can mobilise solutions that reflect the collective will of the student body. In doing so, they not only lead—they uplift.

With the new SRC at the helm, guided by the mentorship of university leadership and the enduring values of MUT, the future of student life looks promising, inclusive, and inspired.



Incoming SRC members taking an oath.

'I, the duly elected member of the SRS of Mangosuthu University of Technology, solemnly pledge and affirm my commitment to serve the students, uphold the values of the Institution, and work towards the betterment of its community'



In this sacred responsibility, I vow to uphold integrity. To serve with honesty, transparency, and respect, always acting in the best interest of the student body, guided by ethical principles'



New SRC President, Mdumiseni Chonco, middle, with Acting Dean of Students, Dr Paulette Naidoo, left, and MUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiya