



# uDENGEZI



## VC NEWSLETTER

Date Issued 10 November 2025

### GET READY FOR IGNITE 2030



Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi,  
Vice-Chancellor and Principal



IGNITE 2030 from vision to delivery

Before we apply brakes to Vision 2025, the Transformer, let me thank all of you for taking MUT to another level in the period 2020-2025. We met all set objectives; from teaching and learning, research and innovation, community engagement, targeted national and international engagements, to providing a supportive environment. Kudos to all of you!

Now, get ready for an exhilarating new journey that sets the stage for transformative change! This bold strategy is designed to propel us into the future, deeply rooted in the core values that define our identity and aspirations: MY-MUT.

IGNITE is fuelled by vibrant principles: Mastery, Yearning for Growth, Mutual Respect, Ubuntu, as well as an unquenchable and steadfast Transparency. These are the driving forces behind our shift in how we work, lead, and make an impact. Respect

strengthens our bonds; Ubuntu celebrates our connections; Mastery pushes us to achieve greatness; Growth keeps our ambition alive; and Transparency fosters trust at every level.

Together, these powerful values create the foundation for IGNITE, a movement where shared ideals ignite collective transformation, enrich our organisational culture, and equip us to thrive as we approach 2030 and beyond. This strategy is a game-changer for a mindset revolution, inspiring courageous leadership among all of us and paving the way for a future energised by thoughtful action. Start reflecting on how, together, we will shift into building the future, sparking a new light, awakening passion, curiosity, and a desire for growth!

## MUT senior lecturer IGNITES focus on MUT health research excellence



Nokukhanya Thembane

MUT is glowing with pride as Senior Lecturer Nokukhanya Thembane, from the Department of Biomedical Sciences, IGNITES the spotlight on our institution with two powerful acknowledgements at the Africa Health Excellence Awards 2025.

At the ceremony held on 15 November 2025 at the Capital Hotel, Zimbali, Thembane was honoured with both the “2025 Health Researcher of the Year” Certificate and a special commendation for Outstanding Contribution to Healthcare in Africa.

These awards are among the continent’s most respected platforms for celebrating individuals whose work sparks progress in health research, clinical practice, policy innovation, and community wellbeing.

With its stringent evaluation of scientific quality, societal impact, and long-term sustainability, the

selection process demands nothing short of brilliance. For Thembane to emerge with dual honours is a testament to the spark she brings to her research, her commitment to mastery, and her unwavering dedication to transforming healthcare in Africa.

Her achievements ignite inspiration, reminding us of the power of excellence, purpose, and impact within the MUT community.

“Please join me in extending our heartfelt congratulations to Nokukhanya Thembane. Her extraordinary achievements continue to elevate our university’s reputation and inspire our entire academic and clinical community,” said an elated Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, MUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal.



Congratulations Nokukhanya

## A truly South African welcome to another African from another country



Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, after receiving a pin of honour from the Sac State President

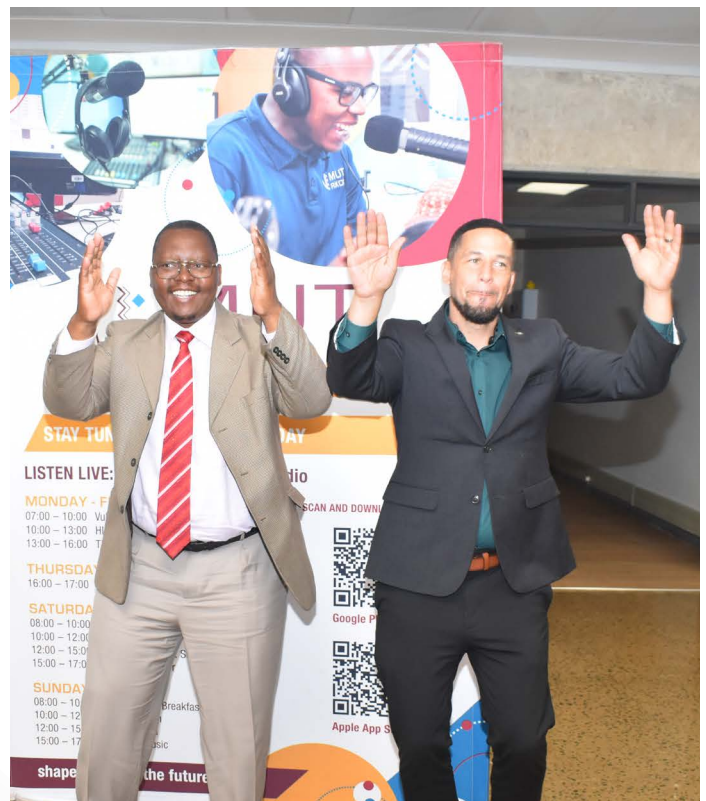
Professor Nokuthula Sibiya's welcome to a delegation led by Dr Luke Wood, President of California State University, Sacramento, USA, left an indelible mark on him and his delegation. It was not only the passionate words of the usual welcome address that are often imparted before the formalities, but the surprise dance and singing of 'Halala' that allowed everyone to join in.

though truly a South African way of leaders, breaking into song and dance, for visitors, this was unexpected yet appreciated, prompting Professor Boatamo Mosuopye, one of the delegations, to say, "we can do

better as universities in the U.S. to make people feel welcome. I have never felt this feeling of being welcome like this."

In her opening address, Professor Sibiya said, "This visit is especially meaningful for me because it is a reciprocal one. Not long ago, in May this year, I led an MUT delegation, and I had the privilege of visiting Sac State, where we were welcomed with warmth, generosity, and a spirit of genuine collaboration.

It was during that visit that Dr Wood expressed his intention to one day come to Umlazi, to visit MUT in person. At the time, it felt like an ambitious dream, perhaps even unattainable. But today, standing here before all of you, I am deeply grateful that what once seemed impossible has become a beautiful reality."



A South African welcome through song and dance. Performing the dance are, left, the Dean of the Faculty of Applied and Health Sciences, Professor Alfred Msomi, and Sac State University President, Dr Luke Wood

## SAC STATE VISIT OPENS NEW HORIZONS FOR MUT



From left, Dr Luke Wood; Professor Nokuthula Sibiya, Hon. Ms Nontembeko Boyce, Speaker of the KZN Legislature

MUT is stepping into a new era of collaboration following the recent visit by Dr Luke Wood, President of California State University, Sacramento. From plans for a dual degree programme and cultural immersion initiatives to the highly anticipated AI Summit 2026, this partnership promises to elevate MUT's academic profile and strengthen ties with global institutions. With commitments from eThekweni Municipality to develop a "African Silicon Valley of eThekweni," the future looks bold and transformative.

The visit on 5 and 6 November 2025, featured a public lecture and a dynamic roundtable discussion. The engagement began with heartfelt appreciation for the support shown by MUT leadership and staff. MUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiya was commended for championing this initiative, which has already sparked meaningful conversations and commitments.

One of the most significant outcomes was the discussion around MUT's proposed Business School. Dr Kevin Ramsarghey, acting Dean: Faculty of Management Sciences, provided valuable context during the roundtable, and Dr Wood expressed keen interest in exploring a dual degree programme between MUT and Sac State. This collaboration

could open doors for students to gain international exposure and competitive qualifications.

Another highlight was the commitment to the upcoming AI Summit 2026. The greatest advantage is that Sac State offers a degree with an AI concentration and has pledged to assist with conceptualisation and to send professors to present at the summit. The visit also reinforced the importance of operationalising the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between MUT and Sac State. Dr Wood shared success stories that MUT could replicate, including initiatives to enhance student life, cultural immersion programmes, scholarships, and exchange opportunities.

Beyond academia, the visit opened doors to strategic partnerships with government and industry. MUT will collaborate with the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature, with Office of the Speaker as a champion and point of contact to build capacity among legislature members and develop bespoke training programmes. Joint efforts will also address societal challenges affecting students living in the city centre, ensuring that MUT's transformation agenda is purposeful and impactful.

## ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY COMMITS TO PARTNERSHIPS WITH MUT AND SAC STATE



From left, Professor Athi Mosupyo, Dean of the Black Honors College, Sac State; Dr Luke Wood; Councilor Cyril Xaba, eThekweni Mayor; Dr Nandi Madiba, Chairperson of Audit & Risk, Gauteng Provincial Legislature; Dr Xolile Ngubane, Senior Director, Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal

Momentum for MUT’s global collaboration plans surged during a breakfast meeting hosted by eThekweni Mayor Cyril Xaba at the Durban ICC on 6 November 2025. The Mayor warmly welcomed the delegation from California State University, Sacramento (Sac State) and pledged the City’s support for ambitious projects that align with MUT’s transformation agenda.

Among the commitments was the establishment of a “Silicon Valley of South Africa,” a visionary initiative aimed at positioning Durban as a hub for innovation and technology. The Municipality also promised to collaborate on developing world-class incubation

centres, embedding artificial intelligence in service delivery, and supporting MUT’s AI Summit 2026. These projects will be followed up by the Senior Director in the office of the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Xolile Ngubane to ensure progress and accountability.

Reflecting on the significance of these commitments, Vice-Chancellor and Principal Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi remarked, “MoUs do not come funded, but a will to make them work could ensure these commitments are fulfilled.” Her words underscore the shared determination to turn plans into reality and position MUT as a leader in global engagement.



The eThekweni Mayor, Councilor Cyril Xaba, middle, seated, with all the participants



Dr Luke Wood giving a talk in the event

## SAC STATE DELEGATION EXPLORES DURBAN'S RICH HISTORY AT KWAMUHLE MUSEUM



Sac State and MUT staff and a Gauteng representative at KwaMuhle Museum



Sac State delegation and MUT staff and a Gauteng government representative at the Durban Harbour

As part of the recent visit by California State University, Sacramento (Sac State), the delegation joined MUT representatives for an enriching cultural experience at the KwaMuhle Museum in eThekweni on 6 November 2025. The museum, a historic landmark that once served as the Native Administration Department, offered the visitors a profound glimpse into South Africa's complex past and its journey toward transformation.

The tour highlighted the struggles and resilience of communities during the apartheid era, showcasing exhibits that document the harsh realities of the migrant labor system and the fight for human dignity. For the delegation, this visit was not just a historical excursion, it was an opportunity to understand the social context that shapes MUT's mission of empowerment and inclusivity.

Dr Luke Wood, President of Sac State, expressed admiration for the museum's role in preserving history and fostering dialogue. "Understanding the cultural and historical backdrop is essential for building meaningful partnerships," he noted during the visit. MUT representatives echoed these sentiments, emphasising that collaborations with global institutions must be rooted in mutual respect and cultural appreciation.

The KwaMuhle Museum experience added depth to the academic discussions held during the visit, reinforcing the importance of cultural immersion programmes for staff and students. Cultural immersion is one of the initiatives proposed under the MUT-Sac State partnership. By connecting history with future aspirations, the visit underscored MUT's commitment to holistic education that values both

## DRIVING TRANSFORMATION THROUGH CAMPUS AESTHETICS: MUT IGNITES A CULTURE OF CARE AND EXCELLENCE



Professor Marcus Ramogale, DVC:  
Teaching and Learning

As part of MUT's broader Transformation Initiative, MUT is proud to launch the Aesthetics and Campus Beautification Project, a strategic effort that IGNITES an environment shaped by our core values of Respect, Ubuntu, Mastery, Yearning for Growth, and Transparency. More than a beautification venture, this project is about cultivating a campus culture that uplifts, inspires, and reflects the spirit of "MY MUT."

Championing this initiative, Professor Marcus Ramogale, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, reminds us that transformation begins with mindset: "Taking care of the environment starts with the mind." This philosophy aligns seamlessly with IGNITE, calling our MUT community to respect shared spaces, embrace Ubuntu through collective responsibility, and pursue mastery in caring for our environment.

Guided by these values, the Aesthetic Task Team has designed a phased implementation plan that blends immediate improvements with sustainable, community-driven practices. Key activities include innovative waste-management campaigns, strengthened partnerships with local authorities, and

student-led programmes such as 'Adopt a Spot', in which individuals or groups commit to maintaining designated campus areas for 3 years.

"Our collaboration with the Durban Solid Waste Division through a Memorandum of Understanding with eThekweni Municipality marks a significant milestone. This partnership will enhance campus cleanliness and provide MUT students with opportunities to contribute creative, cost-effective solutions for environmental care," said Professor Ramogale.

To further ignite behavioural change, a powerful media campaign themed: "A Clean Campus Starts With You", will run across MUT Radio and social media, reinforcing the idea that transformation is driven by psychology, participation, and shared ownership. This approach embodies transparency in communication, a yearning for growth in personal habits, and Ubuntu through collective action.

The Aesthetics and Campus Beautification Project stand as a foundation of MUT's transformation agenda. A clean, vibrant campus strengthens student experience, builds institutional pride, and positions MUT as a forward-thinking university committed to excellence, sustainability, and purposeful change. Together, through IGNITE, we can create spaces that inspire learning and reflect the future we are ready to build.



Professor Marcus Ramogale addressing MUT and Durban Solid Waste staff

## A MESSAGE FROM THE VC ON THE CAMPUS AESTHETIC PROJECT



Professor Nokuthula Sibiya

"I invite every student, staff member, and stakeholder to join hands in this transformation journey. Let us take ownership of our campus spaces, support the initiatives, and live the values that define MUT. Your

participation, whether through adopting a spot, sharing ideas, or simply keeping our environment clean, will make the difference. Together, we will build a campus that reflects who we are and the future we aspire to.

## IGNITING CONVERSATIONS AROUND THE ETHICS OF AI DIALOGUE



MUT, DUT and UKZN staff that attended the workshop. Seated, from left, is a THENSA representative; Professor George Dimitoglou; Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi; Dr Xolile Ngubane, Senior Director, Office of the VC and Principal; and Professor Alfred Msomi, Dean of the Faculty of Applied and Health Sciences

On 23 September 2025, Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) hosted the THENSA Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence Workshop, a landmark event under the THENSA, USA Fulbright Scholarship Partnership. This initiative positioned MUT at the forefront of a critical conversation shaping the future of higher education. The workshop, facilitated by Fulbright Scholar Professor George Dimitoglou from Hood College, USA, brought together participants from four institutions in KwaZulu-Natal: DUT, MUT, UKZN, and UNIZULU. In her opening address, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, highlighted the importance of this dialogue for safeguarding the integrity, credibility, and sustainability of teaching, learning, and research in the era of AI. "Hosting this workshop is a clear demonstration of MUT's commitment to ethical innovation and academic leadership. We are not only responding to global technological shifts but shaping the conversation to ensure that education remains a trusted anchor of society," said Professor Sibiyi.

Through this workshop, MUT has positioned itself as a thought leader in the ethical use of artificial intelligence, shaping national and global conversations on responsible technology adoption. The initiative strengthens the University's capacity by equipping staff and students with practical knowledge and tools for ethical AI integration in research, teaching, and learning. It also opens doors to strategic

partnerships with organisations such as THENSA and the Fulbright Programme, enabling MUT to access valuable resources and expertise. "Most importantly, this effort ensures that MUT remains future-ready, competitive, and aligned with global technological and innovation trends, reinforcing its commitment to excellence and sustainability," Professor Sibiyi said.

Special recognition goes to the Teaching and Learning Development Centre (TLDC) team, specifically, Cebo Nyondo and Ntombikhona Khuzwayo-Nene, for their exceptional coordination. Their efforts reflect MUT's dedication to creating platforms that advance knowledge and uphold ethical standards.



Professor George Dimitoglou

## SAHDIA INVITES MUT TO ANOTHER SAHDIA WORKSHOP



Dr Anette Mienie, middle with Marcomms staff, left, Zama Sishi, and Mbali Mkhize, right

Dr Anette Mienie, acting DVC: RIE, has taken upon herself to ensure that, as acting DVC: RIE, she builds on projects that Professor Nokuthula Sibiyi, former DVC: RIE and now Vice-Chancellor and Principal, pioneered with other DVCs to establish. One of those is MUT being a member of the South African Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (SAHDIA) whose goals are to commit to institutional action(s) to support and drive national and international imperatives such as NDP 2023, DSI Decade Plan, SDGs and Agenda 2063 etc., to commit to institutional action(s) to support a sustained increase of new research outputs being transparent, open and freely accessible for all and meet the expectations of funders, and to champion and leverage international opportunities for the benefit of South African

HDI's and the South African higher education sector. For MUT, being a member of SAHDIA is an advantage because it enables the University to avoid being left out of discussions on how to break the cycle of exclusion. In July 2025, MUT hosted an SAHDIA meeting attended by all Historically Disadvantaged Institutions. This time again, MUT participated in another SAHDIA workshop. Dr Mienie invited the MarComms team to participate alongside representatives from the Research Directorate. Marcomms has played a significant role in providing input to the SAHDIA Communication Strategy. The future of SAHDIA is in the right hands with Dr Mienie being given the opportunity to shape the narrative in research and innovation at a national level.



Professor Jose Frantz, outgoing Chairperson of SAHDIA at the recent SAHDIA workshop hosted by University of Limpopo