

# SPIRIT

IGNITE  
2030

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## OUR VALUES



**Mastery:** Excellence in applied learning, teaching, research, community engagement,



**Yearning for Growth:** Commitment to lifelong learning, entrepreneurial thinking, and continuous development



**Mutual Respect:** Fostering inclusivity, diversity, dignity, and ethical partnerships within and beyond the university.



**Ubuntu:** Social responsibility, collaboration, and impact-driven community engagement grounded in shared humanity.



**Transparency:** Commitment to trust, integrity, accountability, and ethical leadership.

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# OP-ED: A DEFINING MOMENT FOR MUT AS IGNITE 2030 LIGHTS THE PATH



Mbali Mkhize

There are defining moments in a university's journey that stand out not only for the significance of their announcements, but also for the way the community unites to reaffirm its vision. The launch of IGNITE 2030 at Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) was one such moment: a collective commitment to the institutional goals and aspirations embodied in our new MUT Strategy 2026–2030, “IGNITE 2030”.

There was a deep sense of anticipation as staff, students and leadership gathered to mark the beginning of a new chapter. IGNITE 2030 had already begun to shape the University's direction, yet the launch transformed it into a powerful statement.

Among the most memorable moments of the day was the collective recitation of MUT's vision, mission, values and goals, led by Dr Liile Lekena-Bayaga. In that instance, the words that define the institution moved beyond written statements and became a shared declaration. Hearing them spoken in unison created a sense of unity that will likely endure well beyond the event itself.

This act of recitation carried particular significance. As the Marketing and Communications Directorate has noted, embedding institutional values requires more than circulation in documents; it demands active engagement. The recitation served precisely this purpose, grounding IGNITE 2030 in a collective expression of what it means to be part of the MUT community. It was a reminder that the MUT Strategy

2026–2030 calls for lived values, the “MY MUT” ethos across every level of the institution.

Equally powerful was the symbolic lighting of candles, each representing a strategic goal entrusted to members of the University's leadership. As each flame was lit, it marked a goal: from teaching and learning to research, partnerships, financial sustainability and inclusive engagement. There was also a visible commitment to stewardship and accountability.

The symbolism of light resonated deeply. It spoke to clarity of purpose, guidance and continuity. Each candle represented a responsibility borne by leadership, and together they illuminated the path MUT intends to follow. The presence of both executive management and Council leadership during this moment reinforced a shared vision and commitment to implementation.

The unity, symbolism and shared ownership of the launch underscored a central message: IGNITE 2030 is not a document to be observed from a distance, but a call to action requiring participation from all. That's because the responsibility for implementation does not rest with leadership alone; it extends to every department, team and individual.

IGNITE 2030 has set the course. The task now is to carry that same energy forward, translating intention into action and vision into measurable impact.

# FROM THE DESK OF THE INTERIM VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRINCIPAL, PROFESSOR RUSHIELLA SONGCA



Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal,  
Professor Rushiella Songca

***“To live without hope is to cease to live” –  
Fyodor Dostoevsky***

In moments of transition, institutions are called not only to reflect, but to reimagine. As I assume this responsibility, I do so with a deep sense of purpose: to shape a university that is relevant, responsive, and resolute in its commitment to excellence and impact.

The academic project lies at the heart of our journey. Our programmes must be forward-looking, relevant, and sustainable. This requires us to critically examine our programme and qualification mix to ensure that it reflects both current demands and future possibilities. We must move deliberately toward strengthening our postgraduate offerings, particularly at Master’s and Doctorate levels. Our enrolment plan has already created a pathway for this, with our first doctoral programmes set to be introduced in 2029, followed by further expansion in 2030. These are commitments that must be realised.

Achieving our vision will require more than planning; it will require collective ownership. As a university community, we must engage meaningfully with the question of how best to mobilise the resources, partnerships, and intellectual capital necessary to meet the milestones we have committed to in our Strategy 2026–2030. Central to this effort is our understanding that teaching and learning, research

and innovation, and community engagement are interconnected pillars of a single academic mission. We must therefore dismantle silos, where teams work independently of each other, without sharing information and resources and embrace collaboration across portfolios.

Equally important is our renewed focus on research and innovation. Research is central to our relevance and competitiveness. We must intensify our efforts, sharpen our focus, and accelerate our productivity. To this end, I welcome and appreciate the Council’s commitment to support research development. This will enable us to nurture first-time authors and support colleagues in converting theses and dissertations into publishable outputs. We will also expand our Postdoctoral Research Fellow Programme, with a clear emphasis on accountability and measurable impact.

Our research efforts require us to invest in our people. Staff capacitation is fundamental. We must reignite a culture of academic advancement through a “Go Back to School” initiative, encouraging and supporting staff to pursue postgraduate qualifications. When our academics grow, our institution rises. The attainment of doctoral qualifications is a collective asset that enhances our institutional reputation and attractiveness.

Community engagement, too, must remain central to our mission. We are not an island; we exist within and because of our communities. Our work must therefore respond to societal needs and be co-created with the communities we serve. Engagement must be intentional, sustained, and impactful.

We are currently rolling out our 100-Day Plan, which prioritises direct engagement with faculties and staff. These engagements allow us to listen, understand, and co-create solutions. They also help us align expectations and strengthen a shared sense of purpose.

Beyond systems and structures, we must cultivate an institutional culture that is engaging, inclusive, and supportive. Trust is built through consistent, transparent engagement. We must foster a culture rooted in care, respect, and ubuntu. Transformation must be lived, not merely spoken of. Through initiatives such as the Vice-Chancellor’s transformation budget, we will work collaboratively with students and staff to create programmes that meaningfully improve student lives. Our students must also be empowered as active participants – leaders in entrepreneurship, innovation, and social impact.

Finally, our infrastructure must support our ambitions. This includes addressing student housing, campus safety, renovations, and sustainable water solutions.

Resources exist, but we must strengthen our capacity to implement effectively and efficiently.

These five priorities – academic renewal, research intensification, community engagement, administrative efficiency, and institutional culture – are interconnected. Together, they form the foundation upon which we will reset and reimagine our academic project in alignment with our Vision 2030.

This journey will demand commitment, collaboration, and courage. It will require us to embrace a culture of service, take pride in our work, and hold ourselves to the highest standards. I call upon the entire university community, *Nginyanicele*, Council, management, staff, students, and partners, to walk this path with me. Together, we will not only respond to the demands of our time, we will shape the future.

## WELCOME TO PROFESSOR SONGCA, MUT INTERIM VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRINCIPAL



Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Rushiella Songca

### A brief profile of Professor Rushiella Songca

A distinguished legal scholar and a veteran of the higher education sector, Professor Songca brings over 30 years of academic and governance experience to her new role as Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal. Her appointment is viewed as a strategic move to bolster MUT's national profile and drive the University's digital and academic evolution.

Professor Songca's career is defined by her leadership at some of South Africa's largest academic institutions. Most recently, she served as the Vice-Chancellor and Principal at Walter Sisulu University, where she was instrumental in strengthening quality assurance and research outputs.

Professor Songca's executive resumé also includes a transformative tenure at the University of South Africa (UNISA), where, as Executive Dean of the College of Law, she modernised academic delivery through blended and online learning, a skill set that aligns with MUT's current push toward digital transformation.

Beyond the lecture hall, Professor Songca possesses a rare depth of experience in the public sector. Having served as a Director for Policy Coordination and Advisory Services (International Relations) in the Presidency, she has provided high-level counsel to government ministers, sharpening her ability to align university goals with national development priorities.

Professor Songca's leadership extends to the highest levels of sector governance, currently holding or having held positions such as Deputy Chairperson of Universities South Africa (USAf); Deputy Chairperson of the Technological Higher Education Network South Africa (THENSA); and Advocate of the High Court of South Africa.

At her core, Professor Songca remains a deeply respected scholar in Children's Rights, Constitutional Law, and African jurisprudence. Her academic journey reflects a global perspective, with an LLD from the University of Pretoria and an LLM from the prestigious Georgetown University Law Centre in Washington, D.C.

# MUT COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON CALLS FOR UNITY AS INTERIM VICE-CHANCELLOR TAKES THE HELM



MUT Council Chair, Dr Mosidi Makgae, left, and Professor Rushiella Songca, during the introduction of the latter

Marking what she described as a "rare and significant moment" for institutional renewal, Chairperson of Council, Dr Mosidi Makgae, signalled a fresh chapter for MUT as she officially introduced Professor Rushiella Songca as the University's Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal.

Addressing the University community at an off-campus gathering on 2 March 2026, Dr Makgae reflected on the turbulent months the institution has navigated. While praising the "resilience" of staff and students, Dr Makgae emphasised that the time for merely surviving challenges has passed.

"Stability is the foundation upon which growth, excellence, and long-term success are built," Dr Makgae stated. "While resilience is a strength, we must now strive for something even greater: stability at leadership and management levels."

She further emphasised the importance of leadership grounded in ethical principles and institutional integrity as MUT moves forward.

"Ethical leadership and non-partisanship are crucial for the future of this institution. We must always act in the best interest of MUT and ensure that governance processes remain transparent and fair," Dr Makgae stressed. She urged the University's various bodies, including

Senate, organised labour, and student leadership, to prioritise the institution's mission over internal politics. She advised:

- **Loyalty to Mission:** Focus on the University rather than factions or personalities.
- **Ethical Responsibility:** Safeguard strategic momentum through transparent leadership.
- **Collective Wisdom:** Utilise the combined strengths of the Institutional Forum and Executive Management.

The Chairperson clarified that the appointment of an Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal was a strategic decision by the Council to prioritise "institutional credibility" and ensure a seamless transition during a period of change.

"The decision by Council to appoint an Interim Vice-Chancellor is a demonstration of our commitment to continuity and good governance. It ensures that the work of the University continues without disruption while we navigate this transition responsibly," she said. Dr Makgae concluded by reaffirming Council's confidence in the institution's leadership structures and its ability to maintain momentum.

As Professor Songca begins her tenure, the Council's mandate is clear: foster a culture of unity and steer MUT toward a future defined by academic integrity and operational excellence.

# DR ANETTE MIENIE PRAISED FOR STEPPING UP AS ACTING VICE-CHANCELLOR



MUT Chair of Council, Dr Mosidi Makgae, left, with Dr Anette Mienie, at the official introduction of Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Rushiella Songca

As MUT transitioned to new leadership at the beginning of March 2026, the Chairperson of Council, Dr Mosidi Makgae, paid a heartfelt tribute to the outgoing acting Vice-Chancellor, Dr Anette Mienie, for steering the institution through a challenging period.

Speaking at the welcome event for the new Interim Vice-Chancellor on 2 March, Dr Makgae acknowledged the significant progress made under Dr Mienie's leadership, particularly during the 2026 registration period.

"I want to commend the outgoing leadership of Dr Mienie ... for the work done during this transition.

Despite the obstacles, the University has successfully registered students and achieved 85% of the registration target," she said.

Dr Makgae noted that this achievement reflects the institution's resilience in the face of recent leadership and operational challenges, underscoring the collective effort of management and staff.

"This demonstrates the resilience of MUT during a difficult time. It shows that even in the midst of uncertainty, the institution continues to function and deliver on its mandate," she added.

# SENATE WELCOMES MUT'S INTERIM VICE-CHANCELLOR



Dr Anette Mienie

The MUT Senate officially welcomed Professor Rushiella Songca as the institution's Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal at a formal ceremony that was marked by a call for academic renewal. Welcoming Professor Songca, Dr Anette Mienie, the outgoing Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal, centred on the critical "bicameral" relationship between the University Council and Senate. Dr Mienie emphasised that while Council oversees general governance, Senate remains the "custodian of the academic project".

Dr Mienie addressed the evolving nature of higher education, warning against the global trend of "managerialism", in which academic decisions are sometimes shifted away from faculty-led bodies. "There is a danger that the Senate can become a space of rubber-stamping or the playing out of petty politics," Dr Mienie noted. "To enact the Senate's responsibilities fully, we need to explicitly deliberate on and reimagine our role in an ever-changing university environment."

To guide Professor Songca's leadership, Dr Mienie outlined a number of key considerations for a high-functioning academic institution. The first one was regular self-evaluation. A healthy university requires a balance between the fiduciary responsibilities of the Council and the collegial governance of the Senate. Dr Mienie highlighted that tensions often arise over resource allocation, requiring the Vice-Chancellor and Principal to act as a skilled mediator between the two bodies.

The second consideration was the stewardship of the academic project. Citing Professor Jonathan Jansen's 2023 book *Corrupted*, she warned that dysfunctional universities often marginalise their senates. To combat this, MUT has initiated the Senate Colloquium, a space designed for deeper engagement with the University's mission beyond routine administrative tasks.

Regarding managerialism, Dr Mienie expressed concern on the Senate's behalf that "academic capital" (individual status) is sometimes valued over the "intellectual capital" of the collective. She called for a shift away from hierarchical cultures and traditional formalities that can stifle robust debate.

Lastly, she highlighted the need for exemplary leadership. She described the role of the Vice-Chancellor, as Chairperson of Senate, as an "unenviable" one that requires transparency, a lack of defensiveness in the face of critique, and a commitment to protecting academic freedom.

She concluded by defining the three pillars of the academic project that will guide Professor Songca's tenure. These are learning and teaching, referring to exploring innovative approaches to enhance student experience; research and innovation, referring to the advancement of knowledge through national and international collaborations; and community engagement, referring to the strengthening of MUT's connection to society.

"We look forward to working with you; may your tenure be one of growth and achievement," Dr Mienie concluded for the Senate.

## MUT CONVOCATION ALSO WELCOMES PROFESSOR SONGCA



Sandile Dlamini

Like the other formal bodies of the University, the Convocation also welcomed the Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Rushiella Songca. Convocation's theme of the welcome was the preservation of MUT's unique identity. Its President, Sandile Dlamini emphasised that the University must remain a sovereign entity, free from the influence of external academic bodies. "We state categorically that MUT is not a sub-branch of any other university; we are an independent institution," Dlamini asserted. "We definitely are not expecting to see MUT being turned into a sub-branch, as it was beginning to happen."

The MUT Convocation, which represents the University's alumni and broader academic community, expressed a fierce sense of "jealousy" regarding the Institution's reputation and legacy, citing MUT as the foundation of their professional success.

To ensure the success of this new chapter, the leadership called for three things: total stakeholder cooperation. They are urging students, staff, and partners to provide full support to the Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal. They are also calling for a focus on transformation. For this to happen, all stakeholders must work collaboratively to modernise and evolve the University's impact. And lastly, they are calling vigilance. They want the Institution to be protected from being taken for granted by internal or external actors.

The appointment is seen as a pivotal move toward long-term organisational health. Dlamini concluded by welcoming Professor Songca warmly on behalf of the Convocation, noting that the alumni body was eager to begin the work of "changing and transforming" MUT for the better.

# IGNITE 2030 LAUNCH: MUT LAUNCHES VISION 2030 TO GUIDE INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES



MUT leadership holding candles they have just lit

On 13 March 2026, the Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) formally launched its Vision 2030 strategy, known as IGNITE 2030, which sets out institutional priorities for the period 2026 to 2030 under the leadership of Interim Vice-Chancellor Professor Rushiella Songca.

The launch, held during the second week of March, formed part of Professor Songca's 100-day plan following her recent appointment. It introduced the university community to a strategic framework intended to guide academic development, research growth, partnerships and institutional transformation over the next five years.

At least 300 staff members, including academics, researchers and students, attended the event. This was also the first time Professor Songca had met the staff in general. Members of the university's executive committee were also present, signalling institutional support for the strategy and its implementation.

In her address, Professor Songca outlined the strategic direction and priorities that will shape MUT's trajectory. "Our responsibility is to ensure that our academic offering is forward-looking, relevant and sustainable," she said. "Through IGNITE 2030, we are establishing a framework that strengthens teaching

and learning, advances research, and builds meaningful partnerships that contribute to society."

Professor Songca highlighted the importance of collaboration in achieving these objectives, noting that the strategy is grounded in shared institutional values. "This strategy is anchored in a collective effort. It requires collaboration across all sectors of the university and a commitment to transparency and inclusivity in how we move forward," she said.

The launch included a multimedia presentation detailing what IGNITE 2030, 'From Vision to Delivery' is about. The Vision 2030 launch follows a series of engagements led by the Interim Vice-Chancellor to align stakeholders with the university's future direction. Together, these engagements are intended to strengthen leadership credibility, ensure strategic alignment, and foster an inclusive approach to institutional planning.

Many times, during her presentation, Professor Songca immersed herself with the MUT community, using practical examples of how working together and for the University will elevate MUT even further. "Ngiyacela (please), let us work together, and watch this space. Our university will never be the same.

# IGNITE 2030 LIGHTS A FLAME FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE



Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Rushiella Songca, lighting her candle

MUT formally launched its Vision 2030 strategy, “IGNITE 2030”, with a ceremonial event that underscored the institution's commitment to its long-term goals.

While implementation of IGNITE 2030 commenced at the beginning of the year, the launch was a call to action for all stakeholders to actively commit to the vision, mission, values and strategic objectives of MUT.

IGNITE 2030 positions MUT as a driver of transformative education, research and innovation, and inclusive development within Umlazi, South Africa and the broader global academic community.

A central feature of the launch was a collective recitation of the University's vision, mission and values, led by Dr Liile Lekena-Bayaga. Attendees, including staff and students, participated in the recitation, reinforcing a shared understanding of institutional priorities.

According to the University's Marketing and Communications Directorate (MarComms), the

recitation was intended to embed the strategy within the institutional culture. “The act of reciting the vision, mission and values is critical in ensuring that these are not abstract concepts, but principles that are understood, internalised and lived by the university community,” the directorate noted.

The ceremony also included a symbolic candle-lighting, with each flame representing a key strategic goal assigned to members of the executive leadership. Dr Mosidi Makgae lit the candle representing the goal of fostering an engaging and inclusive environment, while Professor Rushiella Songca, Interim Vice-Chancellor, lit the candle for strategic partnerships and institutional visibility. The focus on learning and teaching was represented by Professor Marcus Ramogale, while financial sustainability was symbolised by Bulelani Mahlangu, Chief Financial Officer and Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Resources and Planning. The candle for research, innovation and digital transformation was lit by Dr Anette Mienie, Director for Research, together with Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni, Director for the Community Engagement and Development Directorate.

MarComms explained that the symbolism of light reflects clarity of purpose and collective responsibility, stating that, “The candle-lighting ceremony served as a visual representation of accountability and stewardship, with each executive member associated with a specific institutional priority. The symbolism underscored the expectation that these goals will guide decision-making and resource allocation over the implementation period.”

The directorate further stated, “Each candle represents a commitment to action and accountability. It signifies the responsibility entrusted to leadership to advance specific goals, while also illuminating the path for the broader university community.”

The combined presence of MUT's executive management and Council leadership highlighted a shared vision for the institution's future. University officials indicated that this alignment is essential to ensuring that MUT achieves its objective of becoming a leading university that advances transformative education, supports pioneering research and innovation, and promotes inclusive development. The launch concluded with a renewed emphasis on collaboration and institutional coherence, with stakeholders encouraged to contribute actively to the realisation of IGNITE 2030.

# INTERIM VICE-CHANCELLOR OUTLINES BOLD PLANS FOR MUT'S THREE STRATEGIC PILLARS



Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Rushiella Songca

Addressing staff and students at the Student Centre, as well as those joining online, Professor Songca outlined how IGNITE 2030, the strategic five-year roadmap to MUT's Vision 2030, will guide the University's priorities across its core functions of teaching and learning, research, and community engagement.

Having assumed office less than two weeks before the launch of IGNITE 2030, Professor Songca adopted a collaborative, engaged leadership style, emphasising direct interaction with university divisions and stakeholders.

"I do not believe in just sitting in the office and reading reports," she said. "I visit our divisions to understand their needs, and I maintain an open-door policy for matters that require my attention." This can be attested to by an open 100-day calendar shared throughout the University by the senior director in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Xolile Ngubane.

Professor Songca identified institutional stability as her immediate priority, noting that this will be achieved through targeted interventions, including the urgent filling of vacant posts.

While reaffirming the importance of strong academic programmes, Professor Songca signalled a strategic shift towards strengthening the University's research profile. She observed that expectations within the higher education sector have evolved, requiring

institutions, including universities of technology, to expand their research contributions.

"The higher education landscape has changed, and we must respond accordingly by strengthening our research capacity while maintaining excellence in teaching and learning," she said.

Professor Songca expressed confidence in the University's existing human capital, citing the high qualifications and expertise of both academic and support staff as a foundation for growth.

"Our staff complement provides the springboard we need to advance our institutional goals. We must harness this expertise to build a research-driven and innovative university," she said.

She also called on members of the executive management team to exercise decisive leadership within their respective portfolios, ensuring that the objectives of IGNITE 2030 are translated into measurable outcomes.

The address underscored the integration of teaching and learning, research and innovation, and institutional support as mutually-reinforcing components of the University's development. Professor Songca noted that progress in each area will depend on coordination and shared accountability across the Institution.

# PASTORAL REFLECTION UNDERSCORES VALUES AT MUT'S IGNITE 2030 LAUNCH



Dr Thobile Tobius Poswa

A truly inspiring atmosphere enveloped the launch of the Mangosuthu University of Technology's (MUT) Vision 2030 strategy, aptly named IGNITE 2030, on 13 March 2026. This milestone event was a heartfelt celebration of the values and ethical principles that will illuminate our path forward.

At the heart of this inspiring gathering was Dr Thobile Poswa, affectionately known as TT, Head of the Department of Environmental Health. His heartfelt prayer and stirring sermon resonated deeply with the university's vision, mission, and goals as outlined in IGNITE 2030. As he spoke to staff, students, and esteemed members of the executive, Dr Poswa highlighted the importance of clarity and steadfast faith as we embark on this transformative journey together.

"With a clear vision and direction, let us move forward in faith. May the Biblical truths inspire us all to align our quest for governance excellence with our commitment to serve God," he passionately encouraged.

In his prayer, Dr Poswa sought blessings for the university's leadership and staff, requesting divine guidance and strength as MUT embraces its strategic priorities. He earnestly called for empowering all staff

members, urging them to boldly take ownership of the objectives outlined in IGNITE 2030.

By integrating pastoral care into the launch event, the university framed its vision within a values-driven context, deeply connecting its ambitious goals to a commitment to ethical responsibility. The emphasis on vision, alignment, and service echoed throughout the sermon, reinforcing the core intentions of IGNITE 2030 as it aims to guide the university's evolution in teaching, learning, research, partnerships, and transformation. Dr Poswa's words were a powerful reminder of the significance of accountability and integrity, underscoring the need for unity across the institution. He encouraged all staff and students to embark on this exciting next chapter with a shared dedication to our collective mission.

As MUT sets its sights on Vision 2030, this moment of reflection shone a bright light on a vital truth: the successful realisation of IGNITE 2030 will depend not only on strategic planning but also on the values that drive our decisions and shape our university culture. Let this serve as a guiding beacon for everyone at MUT as we journey toward a brighter, purpose-driven future!

# A PARENTS' MEETING LIKE NO OTHER



MUT staff, parents, students and the media at the meeting

On 14 March 2026, a day after IGNITE 2030 was launched to students and staff, MUT held a stirring meeting with a key stakeholder grouping: the parents and guardians of our students.

In her address, the Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Songca, set a collaborate tone. Rather than speaking alone, she invited key members of her leadership team to present directly to parents, highlighting the University's collective efforts to support students both academically and personally.

"I would like you to also hear from the people who are the backbone of why your children's lives here will be successful," Professor Songca explained. "It is important that you meet those who guide, support, and manage every aspect of your child's experience at MUT."

True to the Interim Vice-Chancellor's word, the meeting included presentations from Professor Marcus Ramogale, MUT's Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning; Dr Paulette Naidoo, Acting Dean of Students; and Bulelani Mahlangu, Acting

Chief Financial Officer and Acting Deputy, Vice-Chancellor: Resources and Planning.

This series of presentations underlined Professor Songca's collective leadership style. By placing her executive team at the centre of engagement with parents, she demonstrated that leadership at MUT is shared and collaborative, with different divisions working in concert to support student success.

"Our goal with IGNITE 2030 is not just to outline a strategic plan, but to show how every part of the University works together to make that vision a reality," Professor Songca said. "Parents need to know that the academic, residential, and financial support systems are aligned and responsive."

As MUT moves forward with IGNITE 2030, this approach ensures that parents, staff, and students alike understand that the University's achievements are the product of collective effort, a community working together to develop capable, resilient and innovative graduates.

## PROFESSOR SONGCA ADDRESSES “THE MOST IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDER”



Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Rushiella Songca, addressing the parents, student, staff and the media

In her powerful address at the Parents' Meeting, Professor Songca underscored the vital role parents play in the University's future. Describing parents as the "most important stakeholder" in the university community, Professor Songca framed the gathering as a rare and valuable opportunity to collaborate, engage openly, and map out the future of MUT together.

"By shaping the future of your children, we are collectively shaping the future of our country. Indeed, their future is our future," she stated, echoing the University's guiding tagline, "Shape and own the future".

The cornerstone of the Interim Vice-Chancellor's address was the introduction of IGNITE 2030, a comprehensive roadmap that will guide the university over the next five years. She emphasised that the strategy is far more than just an internal administrative document; it is a binding promise to parents and students alike. The plan articulates a renewed commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and measurable social impact.

"IGNITE 2030 signals our clear intention to restore MUT to its rightful place as a beacon of success," Professor Songca noted. Quoting the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who said, "Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness," she affirmed the University leadership's dedication to

propelling students toward that light through action and movement.

To ensure these commitments are realised, Professor Songca was accompanied by the rest of the executive management team (profiled below). This team was tasked with outlining their specific contributions to building a sustainable institution and, crucially, seeking the active participation and support of the parents in positioning MUT for long-term success.

A major priority outlined for this new visionary phase is the strengthening of MUT's research initiatives. In a direct appeal, the leadership team invited parents who are positioned in relevant industries to partner with the University and assist in these research endeavours. As MUT embarks on this ambitious reset of its academic project, the broader MUT community was urged to stay connected through the institution's website and official Facebook page to follow ongoing developments.

"On behalf of the Management Team, I seek your support as we reset our academic project," the Interim Principal concluded, thanking the parents for being the backbone of the MUT student community. "Let us collectively shape and own the future."

# ACADEMIC IDENTITY IS THE CORNERSTONE, SAYS PROFESSOR RAMOGALE



Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning,  
Professor Marcus Ramogale

MUT has placed its academic identity at the centre of its strategic direction, and it's on this unique identity that the future of the University depends. Professor Marcus Ramogale, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, presented key insights on MUT's academic identity to the parents, students and other invited guests.

"An academic identity is a product of differentiation. In turn, differentiation is a process which leads to diversity," he said. "Identity speaks to uniqueness; differentiation is the means; and diversity is the end goal."

He noted that a diverse higher education system, as envisaged by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), depends on institutions developing unique missions, varied approaches to teaching and learning, and programmes that prepare students for a range of careers.

"Different institutions must have distinctive missions, different styles of instruction, and educate for different careers," he said. Within this context, Professor Ramogale emphasised that MUT must define and strengthen its position as a university of technology with a clear and distinctive identity. This would ensure that MUT's strategic ambitions are both coherent and sustainable.

He outlined the core components that underpin this identity, including: the University's vision and mission; its institutional culture and values; its teaching and learning philosophy; its graduate attributes; its programme and qualification mix; and its research agenda. These elements, he explained, form the foundation upon which IGNITE 2030 will be implemented.

A key feature of MUT's academic identity is the introduction of a 'core curriculum' designed to equip students with essential competencies. As part of this curriculum, Professor Ramogale highlighted modules such as communication skills, end-user computing, entrepreneurial skills and applied learning through work-integrated learning, community service learning and problem-based learning. Beyond curriculum design, Professor Ramogale challenged students to rethink traditional notions of employment, calling for a shift towards self-reliance and entrepreneurial thinking.

"We must move from 'Go to school, get a good education and get a good job' to 'Go to school, get a good education and stand on your feet'," he said. He distinguished between 'a job' and 'work', describing a job as a task performed for an employer, while work involves identifying problems, developing solutions and creating value.

"There may be no jobs, but there is plenty of work to be done in our country," he said. "Students must look for work, not a job."

Professor Ramogale added that entrepreneurship plays a critical role in fostering accountability and agency, encouraging individuals to take ownership of their futures. "Entrepreneurship teaches that the individual is the captain of his or her destiny," he said, linking this approach to broader efforts to promote self-reliance.

Emphasising the proven philosophy that "people learn more from doing", Professor Ramogale reaffirmed the University's steadfast commitment to Work Integrated Learning (WIL). He assured parents that the institution's well-resourced Department of Cooperative Education will continue its vital work in securing practical placements, ensuring students can successfully complete the hands-on requirements of their studies and step confidently into the professional world.

University officials indicated that articulating MUT's academic identity provides a necessary anchor for IGNITE 2030, ensuring that the University's strategic goals are underpinned by a clear educational philosophy and a distinctive institutional character. The session was part of a series of engagements aimed at enabling them to understand MUT's academic identity.

# MUT REASSURES PARENTS ON STUDENT WELFARE AND RESIDENCE LIFE



Dean of Students, Dr Paulette Naidoo, giving the parents an update on student matters

MUT strives to provide students with a “home away from home”, where safety, comfort and academic success are prioritised. This was the message of the Student Counselling Centre’s Dr Paulette Naidoo as she addressed parents and guardians on 14 March 2026 at the Student Centre on campus.

Reaffirming the University’s commitment to student welfare, she outlined its approach to creating a supportive residential and learning environment.

She explained that the University’s residences are designed not only as places of accommodation, but as environments that support holistic student development. This includes access to safe, secure living spaces and facilities that promote both learning and wellbeing.

Dr Naidoo also highlighted the importance of creating conducive teaching and learning environments across the institution, noting that academic success is closely linked to the quality of support systems available to students.

“We recognise that for students to succeed academically, they must feel safe, supported and comfortable in their environment,” she said.

A key aspect of her presentation was the introduction of the staff responsible for student care within

residences. Dr Naidoo acknowledged the teams who work directly with students daily, ensuring their wellbeing and responding to their needs. She noted that these individuals play a critical role in maintaining discipline, providing guidance and creating a sense of community within residence life.

“These are the people who look after your children while they are with us. They are committed to ensuring that students are supported, guided and cared for throughout their stay at MUT,” she said. She then invited her team to come forward and be recognised by the parents.

She also gave the parents an overview of the structures in place to support students, including residence management and student support services, which work together to provide a comprehensive safety net.

The session formed part of the University’s broader engagement with parents following the launch of IGNITE 2030, the framework for MUT’s Vision 2030. University officials indicated that maintaining strong communication with parents is an important component of building trust and ensuring student success.

The meeting concluded with an opportunity for parents to engage with staff, reinforcing MUT’s commitment to

# MUT CALLS ON PARENTS TO SUPPORT FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY



CFO, Bulelani Mahlangu, appealed to everyone to take good care of the University resources

At the same meeting on 14 March 2026, parents and guardians received a strong call to actively support the University's financial stability. Bulelani Mahlangu, the Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Resources and Planning and Chief Financial Officer, addressed attendees about the urgent need to reduce student debt. During the session, Mahlangu outlined MUT's financial situation and emphasised the critical importance of families honouring their outstanding accounts to ensure the institution's financial sustainability.

"Our financial health depends on everyone doing their part. Reducing student debt is not just an administrative task, it is a shared responsibility that affects the quality of teaching, learning and support services for all students," he said.

He highlighted the University's ongoing debt campaign, which aims to address outstanding balances while encouraging timely payment of fees, and reminded parents that active participation is crucial.

"Each family has an obligation to ensure that their student's debt is managed responsibly. Meeting these obligations allows MUT to continue providing quality education, safe and conducive learning environments, and the range of student support services our community depends on," he explained.

Mahlangu also spoke about the role of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) in supporting students. He explained the funding criteria, including eligibility and the requirement for students to meet academic and administrative conditions, and confirmed that disbursements have been made to qualifying students.

"NSFAS has already disbursed funds to students who meet the criteria. While this provides critical support, families must still ensure that their financial responsibilities to the University are fulfilled," he said. He emphasised that responsible financial management is directly linked to the University's broader strategic priorities, including the goals outlined in IGNITE 2030. Reliable revenue from tuition and fees enables MUT to invest in academic programmes, research initiatives, student residences and campus facilities.

Parents were encouraged to engage proactively with the Finance Office for guidance and to participate fully in the debt-reduction campaign.

"Our commitment to providing quality education goes hand in hand with sound financial stewardship. Together, we can ensure that MUT remains a strong, sustainable institution for years to come," Mahlangu concluded.

# MUT APPLAUDS GIFT OF THE GIVERS FOR SUSTAINED HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT DURING REGISTRATION



Gift of the Givers and MUT staff came out of their offices and dished food to the students and prospective students

The MUT community has expressed heartfelt gratitude to Gift of the Givers for its unwavering support in providing meals and water to students during the 2026 registration period.

Marking 11 consecutive days of service, the humanitarian organisation ensured that hundreds of students waiting for registration, financial clearance, and NSFAS confirmation received warm, nutritious meals daily. The initiative has not only addressed immediate needs but has also restored dignity and comfort to students navigating a challenging and often uncertain process.

What began as a simple WhatsApp request from Mbali Mkhize, MUT's Senior Director for Marketing and Communications, to Mr Rayhaan Muhammad Sooliman, son of Dr Imtiaz Sooliman, quickly turned into decisive action. With no bureaucracy or delays, the organisation responded promptly, demonstrating the strength of its longstanding relationship with the University.

Although the initial request was to support 500 students, the initiative rapidly expanded to serve nearly 1 000 students daily over the 11-day period.

The quality and dignity of the meals, widely shared on social media, have drawn appreciation from students, staff, parents, and alumni alike.

Chairperson of Council, Dr Mosidi Makgae, praised the initiative, stating, "Blessed is the hand that gives." Reflecting on the impact, Mkhize highlighted the intervention's critical timing. "It was January, and many parents had stretched their resources just to bring their children to MUT. Delays in internet connectivity meant extended stays on campus. In that moment, our relationship with Gift of the Givers brought immediate humanitarian relief," she said.

Beyond providing food, the initiative has inspired a deeper sense of community and compassion. An anonymous student captured this sentiment in a poem dedicated to the organisation, describing the meals as "a lifeline of hope" and praising the dignity and care with which they were delivered.

Gift of the Givers, we commend your commitment to humanity. Your partnership with MUT exemplifies how empathy and swift action can transform moments of hardship into hope. With gratitude we say: Kwande!

# MUT STAFF MEMBERS TO BOLSTER RETIREMENT FUND GOVERNANCE AND RESILIENCE



Dr Bonginkosi Zwane, left and Andrew Kubone

The National Tertiary Retirement Fund (NTRF) is poised to strengthen its strategic oversight following the appointment of two professionals from MUT. The addition of Dr Bonginkosi Zwane and Andrew Kubone to the NTRF Board marks a strategic move to enhance the fund's duty execution and ensure the long-term protection of member interests.

Dr Zwane, a Senior Lecturer in MUT's Department of Accounting and Law, expressed both humility and a clear sense of purpose regarding his new role. Highlighting the weight of the responsibility, he noted that pension funds are the bedrock of financial security for thousands of members. "My approach will focus on strengthening governance oversight, risk management, and long-term investment sustainability," Dr Zwane stated. "I will also prioritise transparency, accountability, and strong internal controls, while working collaboratively to ensure decisions are data-driven."

According to Dr Zwane, the Board's upcoming agenda will be rigorous, focusing on keeping the fund resilient against fluctuating economic climates. Key pillars of his contribution will include investment strategy review to ensure asset-liability alignment and robust funding policies; risk management by developing frameworks to protect the fund across various economic scenarios; and stakeholder interests, aligning every board decision with the best interests of beneficiaries.

The election of these MUT staff members comes at a time when prudent management of retirement assets is more critical than ever. Dr Zwane views his appointment as a vital opportunity to contribute to the NTRF's "sustainability and credibility".

"I am honoured by the confidence placed in me," Dr Zwane added. "This is an opportunity to reinforce the fund over the long term through strong governance and prudent asset management."

# MUT TO STRENGTHEN SADC TIES THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH LESOTHO'S AGRITECH INSTITUTE



The Dean of the Faculty of Applied and Health Sciences, Professor Alfred Msomi, standing, nearest to camera, addressing the delegation from Lesotho and their students, and MUT staff

MUT is on the verge of a significant international breakthrough following a visit from Lesotho's Agritech Institute. The meeting, held on 3 March 2026, between the Lesotho TVET and MUT's Faculty of Applied and Health Sciences, has paved the way for a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that promises to bolster agricultural research and student mobility across borders.

The partnership originated from a recent outreach mission by MUT's Directorate of Marketing and Communications to Lesotho. During the trip, led by senior director Mbali Mkhize, departmental staff identified the Agritech Institute of Lesotho, in Leribe, as a prime candidate for collaboration. Given the Institute's specialised focus, the conversation naturally turned to MUT's Faculty of Applied and Health Sciences, which includes a Department of Agriculture. The team then invited the Agritech Institute leadership to schedule a visit to MUT.

Following a tour of the MUT main campus, representatives and students from the Agritech Institute met with the Dean of the Faculty, Professor Alfred Msomi. According to Professor Msomi, the talks centred on three "strategic pillars" designed to benefit both institutions:

**Student exchange programmes:** Creating a pipeline where Lesotho students can integrate into MUT's academic environment, while MUT students travel to

Lesotho to gain practical, hands-on experience in different agricultural climates.

**Joint research initiatives:** Collaborative projects that involve both lecturers and students, focusing on solving regional agricultural challenges.  
**Staff development:** A co-supervision model where MUT faculty members provide guidance to TVET staff pursuing senior qualifications.

"There is a possibility of us having students from Agritech Institute joining us. Also, our students may go to the Agritech Institute to learn what they are doing," said Professor Msomi, emphasising the mutual nature of the deal.

For MUT, this is not just a local agreement, it is a key piece of a much larger puzzle. Mbali Mkhize noted that the SADC (Southern African Development Community) region is a primary focus for the University's "internationalisation project".

"We went to Lesotho with a plan to make connections that will benefit MUT and our neighbour," Mkhize commented. "We did not expect that our visit would have such an immediate impact."

As the University prepares to formalise the MOU, the potential for shared knowledge and regional food security through improved agricultural education remains a top priority.

# MUT HOSTS COSAS MASTERCLASS TO MARK HUMAN RIGHTS DAY AND PROMOTE VOLUNTEERISM



**MUT**  
**MANGOSUTHU**  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

In anticipation of Human Rights Day, the Community and Engagement Directorate (CEAD) at MUT hosted an online masterclass in partnership with the Committee for South African Solidarity (COSAS) in the USA. The masterclass focused on community building and grassroots organising, reinforcing the University's commitment to volunteerism and civic engagement. COSAS is an all-volunteer organisation dedicated to building solidarity between the working people of the USA and South Africans still striving for economic and political freedom, as articulated in the 1955 Freedom Charter.

The masterclass brought together participants from diverse backgrounds, including rural schools, academics from other universities, and students from the University of Venda. Despite the time difference, the COSAS team in San Francisco joined the session at 6h00 (15h00 SA time), ready to engage and share expertise in grassroots volunteerism.

Mbali Mkhize, Senior Director of Marketing and Communications at MUT, praised CEAD for taking the lead in continuing the series, noting that last year's inaugural session had set a strong foundation. "This uptake on internationalisation by CEAD is an indication that when we establish partnerships, there must be an uptake by departments," she said.

Professor Busisiwe Nkonki-Mandleni, Director: CEAD, also shared her perspective: "Our focus is to ensure that our students understand the spirit of volunteerism,

and no greater partners can do this better than COSAS, whose model is grounded in grassroots mobilisation and the training of volunteers."

At the conclusion of the session, Dr Shozi, CEAD Deputy Director, who was at the forefront of organising the masterclass at MUT, emphasised the importance of instilling the spirit of volunteerism in students. He also urged the COSAS team to consider hosting MUT student volunteers for practical, hands-on training. The proposal was welcomed by Nicole Richards, Operations Director of COSAS, who committed to providing on-site training at their volunteer camps.

Mkhize highlighted the value of this partnership for the University's student mobility programmes. "This collaboration delivers directly on our objectives for student mobility. It offers experiential learning opportunities while reinforcing civic responsibility and active participation in society," she said.

The masterclass exemplifies MUT's ongoing commitment to social justice, volunteerism, and international collaboration. It also reinforces the University's role in preparing students to engage meaningfully in their communities while building networks that support lifelong learning and civic responsibility.

This marks the second masterclass in the series hosted by CEAD, signalling a sustained effort to embed volunteerism and civic engagement in the student experience at MUT.

# DLRRD LAUNCHES 2026 WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAMME AT MANGOSUTHU UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



Chief Surveyor General, Siyabonga Mdubeki, had a very important message for the MUT students

The National Department of Land Reform and Rural Development (DLRRD) has officially signalled a new chapter for aspiring geomatics professionals. On 25 February 2026, the Office of the Chief Surveyor-General launched the department's 2026 Work Integrated Learning (WIL) programme at MUT. The initiative underscores the department's commitment to bridging the gap between lecture hall theory and the high-stakes reality of professional surveying.

The 12-month in-service training programme welcomes a cohort of Diploma and Bachelor's graduates from MUT and other leading institutions. These students have been strategically placed across the country to gain diverse experience in government offices such as the National Office (Gauteng); the Surveyor-General offices in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal; the eThekweni and Msunduzi municipalities; and various geomatics and surveying firms.

Under the mentorship of seasoned professionals, graduates will engage in hands-on functions including mapping, spatial data management, and technical surveying, all designed to prepare them for registration with the South African Geomatics Council, and the world of work.

The event held special significance as Siyabonga Mdubeki, the Chief Surveyor-General of South Africa and a 1995 MUT alumnus, returned to his roots to address the students. Mdubeki delivered a candid and motivational keynote message, urging students to move beyond mediocrity.

"Do not be a 50/50 student. If you can produce a distinction, go for it," Mdubeki challenged. "In this

industry, we provide evidence in serious court cases. We are people of excellence. You are not entitled to help – you must deserve it."

Mdubeki emphasised that while the department offers full bursaries to deserving candidates, the "bar is raised" when competition is high. He further called upon industry partners like Optron to join the department in providing additional resources to support the growing needs of the student body.

The launch included a technology exhibition where students interacted with the latest surveying equipment. For many attendees, the day was a wake-up call regarding the weight of their future roles. Mihle Owam Mhlamvu, an S4 Surveying Engineering student, reflected on the Chief's words: "I was reminded not to settle for just passing. Funding is not something we are entitled to, but something we should honour through hard work and professionalism."

Similarly, Nokulunga Mdlalose noted the importance of staying grounded in fundamentals despite the rise of AI in the sector. "Excellence should be our standard. I value the discussion on how technology is shaping our profession, but strong fundamentals will always be important."

The DLRRD's investment in the 2026 WIL Programme is a vital component of the South African technical skills pipeline. By fostering ethical behaviour, discipline, and high academic standards, the department aims to secure a future of sustainable land reform and rural development led by a new generation of "distinction-level" surveyors.

# FUTURE-PROOFING CAREERS: SAICHE HOSTS SUCCESSFUL STUDENT MEMBERSHIP DRIVE AT MUT



Elly Obwaka, SAICHE national, also gave an address

The Student Centre foyer at MUT was abuzz with professional ambition on 5 March 2026 as the South African Institution of Chemical Engineers (SAICHE) hosted a high-impact membership drive for the Department of Chemical Engineering.

The event, aimed at bridging the gap between classroom theory and industrial reality, and showing the importance of being the 'right' person for the job – provided students with a roadmap for professional registration and career longevity. Dr Marc Tshibangu, Senior Lecturer at MUT and SAICHE-KZN Deputy Chairperson, emphasised that the drive was a crucial step in "fostering professional engagement and preparing future chemical engineers for successful careers."

Representing the Chemical Engineering Department, Njabulo Zulu opened the proceedings by urging students to take an active role in their professional development. The message from the podium was clear: technical skills are the foundation, but professional networking is the catalyst for a successful career.

Key industry and academic figures shared insights on the evolving chemical engineering landscape. Sbu Ntshantshali of SAICHE-KZN provided a comprehensive overview of membership tiers tailored for students. Joandie Naidoo, SAICHE-KZN Public Relations Officer, highlighted the importance of "workplace readiness", stressing that recruitment often favours those who demonstrate professional conduct and early commitment to the industry through bodies like SAICHE. Lastly, Dr Khalid Osman, MUT Senior Lecturer, demystified the path to professional registration with the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA), a critical milestone for any aspiring engineer.

For the students in attendance, the drive was not only about networking; it was about accessing a robust toolkit designed to support their journey from the lecture hall to the plant floor.

Several key membership benefits were highlighted. The first is professional recognition, as SAICHE is an ECSA-accredited Voluntary Association, and membership may count toward registration as a Professional Engineer (Pr.Eng). Members also receive educational support, as SAICHE maintains high academic standards by participating in university audits and educational forums. Additionally, members have access to regional branches and special interest groups, as well as opportunities to serve on committees to build leadership skills.

As a member, one also benefits from accessing a dedicated member portal for continuing professional development (CPD) courses, research presentation opportunities at the SAICHE Congress, and discounted rates on journals and books. Also, through the World Chemical Engineering Council (WCEC), SAICHE links local students to the international engineering community.

The event saw a strong showing from the SAICHE-KZN leadership, including Secretary Dr Nkululeko Nkosi, Treasurer Dr Madison Lasich, and National Secretary Elly Obwaka. Their presence underscored the institution's commitment to nurturing the next generation of South African chemical engineers. As the drive concluded, the sentiment among the students was one of empowerment. By joining SAICHE early, MUT's chemical engineering cohort is not just earning a certificate but gaining a lifelong professional family.

# MUT STUDENTS TAKE CENTRE STAGE IN CRITICAL 2026 KZN SOPA DEBATE



MUT and DUT students, and staff inside the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature Boardroom

In a powerful display of civic engagement, students from Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) stepped out of the lecture halls and into the heart of provincial governance. On 3 March 2026, a delegation of 33 students participated in the KwaZulu-Natal State of the Province Address (SOPA) address, proving that the youth of Umlazi Township are far from passive observers in the South African political landscape.

The visit was an outcome of an invitation by the Speaker of the KZN Legislature, Nontobeko Boyce, on 7 November 2025, when she was on campus with a US delegation and other stakeholders. The group comprised of 18 students from the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, and 15 from Management Sciences; they represented the University's Student Volunteer Programme and Peer Helper Group.

The 2026 SOPA focused on the "big five" of provincial challenges: unemployment, economic recovery, gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), education, and social cohesion. For MUT, this engagement was more than a field trip; it was a practical application of the University's Anchor Strategy. Dr Mfanozelwe Shozi, Deputy Director: CEAD, said that through the CEAD's Ngqayizivele Student Volunteer Programme, MUT aims to produce "socially responsive graduates." "By witnessing the debate firsthand, students were able to align their volunteer leadership skills with the pressing socio-economic realities of the province," said Dr Shozi.

The students did not just listen, they analysed what they heard. Following the proceedings, a wave of critical reflection swept through the delegation. Sthandwasethu Mampuru, a student participant, noted that while the province's challenges were well-articulated, the "how" was missing. "There was a noticeable gap in presenting clear, implementable solutions," Mampuru observed, echoing a sentiment

shared by many peers who felt that political rhetoric often masks a lack of actionable policy.

Some key student concerns included the "absorptive capacity" gap: Students highlighted the plight of matriculants who pass their exams but find no space in universities or the job market. The economic instability: Concerns were raised regarding the potential liquidation of Tongaat Hulett and its impact on workers. And lastly, the students questioned whether the discourse surrounding the renaming of KwaZulu-Natal would offer any tangible benefits to young people seeking employment.

One of the most poignant critiques to emerge from the session involved the lack of inclusivity. While the Premier highlighted the "Silwa nechilo" campaign against GBVF, a move MUT students strongly affirmed, other sectors felt sidelined. Thobile Mbhele, MUT's Community Liaison Officer, pointed out a glaring omission in the debate: the rights and inclusion of people living with disabilities. "If we are speaking about social justice and economic inclusion, we must deliberately include persons with disabilities in those conversations," Mbhele stated. She emphasized that for an institution rooted in Umlazi Township, serving first-generation students, inclusivity is "foundational," not optional.

As the debate concluded, the consensus was clear: the 2026 SOPA served as a masterclass in public accountability for the MUT delegation. By challenging leadership and demanding concrete steps toward poverty eradication, these students demonstrated that they are critical stakeholders in the province's future. In a year where KZN navigates complex socio-economic waters, the voices from Umlazi Township are ensuring that the provincial government stays focused on meaningful, solution-oriented development.

# NEW R3-MILLION GYM OFFICIALLY OPENS



MUT students are already enjoying the new gym

The MUT community has a new reason to break a sweat. In a vibrant ceremony led by Interim Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Rushiella Songca, the University officially inaugurated its state-of-the-art gym facility at the beginning of March. The project, which saw an investment of R3 million, represents a significant leap forward in campus wellness and student development.

During her keynote address, Professor Songca highlighted that the gym is more than just a place for physical exercise; it is a sanctuary for mental clarity. “Everyone needs to visit the gym every now and then. We need to de-stress. This is when ideas can come to your head,” Professor Songca remarked.

Leading by example, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal committed to visiting the facility at least once a month to train. Her sentiments were echoed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning, Professor Marcus Ramogale, who commended the Department of Sport and Recreation for their fiscal discipline. “In Africa, we do more with less,” he noted, praising the high-quality results achieved with the R3-million budget.

The event also touched on the broader development of student-athletes. Siyabulela Mkwalo, Deputy Director of the Department of Sport and Recreation, recalled Professor Songca’s recent call for students to

broaden their horizons through travel. Mkwalo shared a poignant reminder of why administrative readiness also matters: “Last year, we had a bodybuilding student who could not travel to a tournament because he did not have a passport.”

Mkwalo emphasised that the department shares the Vice-Chancellor’s vision of excellence, ensuring students are prepared for both local competition and international stages.

The facility features equipment from Technogym, a global leader in fitness technology. Andre Rheeder, a sales consultant for the brand, assured users that the equipment is designed for maximum safety and inclusivity, with weight capacities up to 220kg. Each piece of equipment is fitted with a QR code, allowing users to scan and instantly access instructional information and safety guidelines.

The gym is now open to both students and staff under a tiered subscription model designed to suit various budgets and schedules. Gym membership for students is R156 a month, while staff members will have to pay R312 for the same period. The gym is open from 8am to 6pm in March 2026. From April onwards, it will open from 6am to 9pm during weekdays; from 7am to 3pm on Saturday; and 7am to 1pm on Sundays and holidays.

# MUT FLEXES ITS MUSCLES AT SOUTH AFRICA INNOVATION WEEK



The TTO team. From left, Portia Dlamini, Makhosi Cebekhulu, and Dr Mandla Hlongwane

The University took centre stage at the South Africa Innovation Week (SAIW) at Nasrec Expo Centre in Johannesburg, showcasing a portfolio of pioneering technologies developed by its researchers. The event, which ran from 16 to 20 March 2026, served as a premier platform for MUT to demonstrate its commitment to research that addresses real-world challenges, while driving economic development and sustainability.

The University's exhibition was spearheaded by the Research Directorate's Technology Transfer Office (TTO). Represented by Makhosi Cebekhulu and Portia Dlamini, the TTO's strategic focus during the week was to connect MUT researchers with industry stakeholders, potential funders, and innovation partners.

Dr Mandla Hlongwane, Deputy Director of Technology Transfer, emphasised that visibility at such national events is critical for the commercialisation of local technology. "Participation in events like South Africa Innovation Week is critical for bridging the gap between research and industry," said Dr Hlongwane. "Our goal is to ensure that the work produced at MUT translates into meaningful socio-economic benefits." The MUT stand drew significant attention for its diverse range of sustainable and high-impact solutions:

**Organic Herbicide:** An environmentally friendly alternative for sustainable agriculture, designed to reduce chemical footprints in farming.

**Ceiling in a Can:** A novel, cost-effective construction product aimed at improving building efficiency and housing affordability.

**Sea Wave Energy Harvester:** A renewable energy breakthrough that harnesses the power of ocean waves to generate clean electricity.

**Novel Enzyme Inhibitors:** Advanced biochemical solutions with the potential to revolutionise cancer treatment in the healthcare industry.

By participating in SAIW, MUT continues to solidify its position as a key contributor to South Africa's growing knowledge economy. The University's proactive approach ensures that academic research doesn't remain confined to the laboratory but is instead translated into impactful solutions that benefit both society and industry.

Through these strategic engagements, MUT remains dedicated to accelerating the journey from "concept to consumer", fostering collaborations that will see these locally-developed technologies reach the global market.

# GOOD news FRIDAY TURNS 15



In a recent survey, respondents still overwhelmingly agreed that its name and purpose reflect the spirit of MUT.

Beyond the numbers and growth, GnF represents something deeper: unity.

“Across organisations worldwide, internal newsletters have long been recognised as powerful tools for building cohesive communities. By sharing achievements, milestones, and human-interest stories, they create a shared narrative that connects individuals across departments and roles. At MUT, GnF has done exactly that”, said the MarComms team.

Each Friday, staff and stakeholders are brought together through stories of academic excellence, student success, innovation, and community engagement. In doing so, GnF fosters a culture of recognition, where accomplishments are acknowledged, voices are amplified, and everyone feels part of a collective journey.

Research and practice in organisational communication show that internal platforms like this:

- Strengthen a sense of belonging by highlighting shared values and goals
- Boost morale by recognising achievements and contributions
- Improve transparency and trust through regular, reliable updates
- Encourage collaboration by showcasing cross-departmental initiatives.

GnF embodies all these principles. It has become more than a publication; it is a weekly touchpoint that reinforces MUT’s identity and celebrates its people.

“As we celebrate 15 years of sharing GoodNewsFriday, we bow our heads in gratitude to the MUT community and our external stakeholders,” the MarComms team shared. “Their support reminds us that we are making a meaningful impact. We also recognise our statutory stakeholders who continue to draw from GnF content to elevate the University’s profile.”

As the pages of GoodNewsFriday continue to grow, so too does its impact, connecting people, sharing stories, and strengthening the fabric of the University. Here’s to another 15 years of celebrating good news, together.

Marketing and Communications looks at this edition with great pride

For 15 years, the Marketing and Communications (MarComms) at MUT has done more than publish a weekly newsletter, it has built a sense of community. GoodNewsFriday (GnF), first introduced in 2011 as a modest one-page internal update, has grown into a vibrant storytelling platform that continues to strengthen internal communication, celebrate excellence, and keep the University community informed and inspired. As of 20 March 2026, the team has published an impressive 686 editions, a testament to consistency, dedication, and purpose.

What makes this milestone even more remarkable is how GnF has evolved. From its early days as a simple bulletin, it now regularly features multi-page editions, with some, like the 20 March 2026 issue – reaching up to 17 pages. On occasion, demand for storytelling has even led to Special GnF editions, reflecting the depth and breadth of the University’s achievements.

“When we first conceptualised GnF, we asked staff if they felt the name should change,” the MarComms team recalls. “The response was overwhelmingly positive. People felt the name captured the essence of MUT. Fifteen years later, that sentiment remains unchanged.”

# FIVE YEARS ON AIR: MUT RADIO MARKS A MILESTONE IN CAMPUS BROADCASTING



Maskandi great, Hhashelim'hlophe, standing, with head gear, and his wife, Linah Ngcobo, seated, were some of the esteemed guests that were hosted by the MUT Radio recently

MUT Radio, launched on 16 June 2021, has proven to be a successful innovation by the MUT, serving as a vibrant platform for information, education, entertainment, and student development. Since its inception, the station has grown into an important voice for the university community while also providing students with practical experience in broadcasting and media production.

Since its launch, the station has hosted several international guests, including Glenn Jones and AJ Ghent from the United States, Carol Souki from Venezuela, and Tutu Powana from Switzerland, among others.

MUT Radio has also established meaningful international collaborations, working with stations such as Fresh FM from Namibia and UNESWA FM from the University of Eswatini. In addition, the station has built strong relationships with several campus radio stations across South Africa, including UJ FM, Voice of Wits (VOW) FM, Rhodes Music Radio, MFM from Stellenbosch University, and TUT FM, among others. These collaborations have enabled knowledge-sharing and strengthened the campus radio network locally and internationally.

Over the years, the station has played a significant role in student development, having trained more than 60 MUT students in various areas of broadcasting. These include radio presenting, radio production, news compiling and reading, as well as technical production, ensuring that students gain valuable industry-relevant skills.

MUT Radio has also produced talented broadcasters who have progressed into the professional industry. These include the likes of Slindile Ngobese, who is now with Vuma FM; and Sbusiso Lushozi and Lusanda Mnyayi, who both joined Gagasi FM. In addition, several presenters have moved into the community radio sector, including Sandiswa Zondi, Magugu Xaba, and Sbongokuhle Khumalo, who are now part of Midlands 104 FM in Pietermaritzburg.

MUT Radio has also conducted numerous successful outside broadcasts, covering university events as well as community-based activities. MUT Radio has particularly focused on engaging with schools in Umlazi and surrounding communities, strengthening its relationship with the community while promoting media awareness among young people.

As a station, MUT Radio takes music compliance seriously, working closely with Music Collective Management Organisations. This commitment led to the station receiving a Certificate of Compliance from CAPASSO, recognising its adherence to music copyright regulations.

Over the years, MUT Radio has also collaborated with several well-known brands, including Dunns, Red Bull, and Vodacom, supporting student engagement initiatives and station activities.

Recently, the station successfully hosted two major events. The first was a Climate Change Awareness Event, organised in collaboration with the Community Extension Department. The second was the "I Love Radio Experience", a res-to-res activation hosted on campus, aimed at promoting student engagement with campus radio.

Together, these achievements highlight MUT Radio's continued growth and impact as a training platform for young broadcasters and a dynamic voice within the MUT community and the broader society. Viva MUT Radio!

# STUDENT LEADERSHIP AT THE COALFACE



SRC President, Mdmiseni Chonco

At a time when student leadership is often measured by statements and promises, MUT's SRC President, Mdmiseni Chonco is redefining it through visibility, action, and presence.

Chonco's leadership style, best described as visibility management, is rooted in the belief that leaders must be seen, heard, and actively engaged in the lives of those they serve. Rather than leading from a distance, he has consistently placed himself at the centre of student experiences, demonstrating a hands-on approach that is steadily transforming student leadership at MUT.

His influence was particularly evident during a recent international engagement, where he joined university representatives on a visit to California State University, Sacramento – more commonly known as Sacramento State or Sac State. Inspired by the inclusive leadership of Sacramento State's President, Luke Wood, Chonco made a bold and public commitment to expanding global opportunities for MUT students.

"Inspired by President Luke Wood's inclusive approach towards making students' experiences more productive, memorable, and successful, I feel that as a

President I would honour my responsibility by ensuring that our students are able to experience Sac State, and that even our sports teams may get a chance to play against Sac State teams," he said to enthusiastic applause during a visit by Dr Luke Wood.

His remarks resonated strongly with students, many of whom see international exposure not just as an academic opportunity but as a gateway to global citizenship, cultural understanding, and future employment.

Beyond advocating for a broader, more global student experience, Chonco has shown an equally strong commitment to cultural and spiritual inclusivity at home. On 10 March 2026, he joined staff and students at MUT's Student Centre to mark the 116th anniversary of the Nazareth Baptist Church, founded by Isaiah Shembe.

Among a sea of white uniforms and rhythmic prayer, his presence spoke volumes. By humbling himself and standing alongside students in this deeply significant celebration, Chonco reinforced an important principle of his leadership: that student representation means showing up for all facets of student life, academic, cultural, and spiritual.

Perhaps most telling of his leadership style, however, was his role during the University's registration period. At a time often marked by stress and uncertainty, Chonco was at the forefront of negotiations with University management, advocating for practical student needs, including access to meals for those in need. His involvement ensured that vulnerable students were not overlooked, highlighting a leadership approach grounded in empathy and responsiveness.

Through these actions, a clear picture emerges. By being visible in international spaces, present in cultural and spiritual gatherings, and active in critical student support processes, Chonco is reshaping what it means to lead. His approach fosters trust, strengthens relationships between students and management, and creates a sense of shared purpose within the University community.

In an environment where students seek leaders who not only speak but act, Chonco's visibility-driven leadership is setting a new standard and making a real impact.

## VISION

To be a leading University of Technology advancing transformative education, pioneering research and innovation, and inclusive development.



## MISSION:

We empower society through innovative learning, applied research, entrepreneurial graduates, and collaborative partnerships.



## CORE VALUES: (MY MUT)

# The MY MUT values build on the University's

- M** **MASTERY:** Excellence in applied learning, teaching, research, community engagement, leadership, and innovation.
- Y** **YEARNING FOR GROWTH:** Commitment to lifelong learning, entrepreneurial thinking, and continuous development.
- M** **MUTUAL RESPECT:** Fostering inclusivity, diversity, respect, and ethical partnerships within and beyond the university.
- U** **UBUNTU:** Social responsibility, collaboration, and impact-driven community engagement grounded in shared humanity.
- T** **TRANSPARENCY:** Commitment to trust, integrity, accountability, and ethical leadership.

To embed these values into daily practice, MUT has developed a Values-in-Practice Framework (Annexure 3), which defines expected behaviours and provides institutional indicators and monitoring mechanisms to guide culture, performance, leadership, and student engagement.

## STRATEGIC GOALS:

### GOAL 1:

Future-Fit Learning and Teaching

### GOAL 2:

Financial Sustainability

### GOAL 3:

Research, Innovation, and Digital Transformation

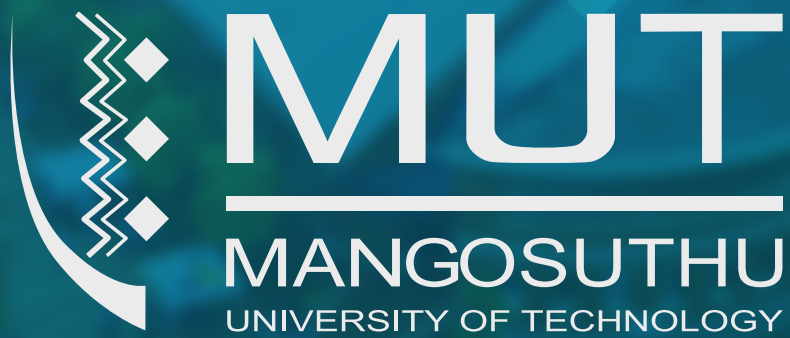
### GOAL 4:

Strategic Partnerships, Internationalisation and Visibility

### GOAL 5:

Engaging, Inclusive, and Supportive Environment





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