



Inaugural address: 2018

Dr Enoch Duma Malaza

“To Shape and Own the Future”

The Minister of Higher Education and Training, Honourable Dr Naledi Pandor

The Chancellor, Honourable Ms Lindiwe Sisulu

Our Founder, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi

The Chairperson of Council, Mr. Morailane Morailane

Members of Council of the University

MUT Executive Management

Members of the Senate

Chairperson and members of the Institutional Forum

Members of the Convocation and Alumni

Fellow Vice Chancellors

Chairperson, Chief Executive Officer and members of Universities South Africa

Chairperson, Chief Executive Officer and members of the South African Technology Network

Chairperson, Chief Executive Officer and members of the Council on Higher Education

Members of the diplomatic corps present with us

MUT strategic partners

Members of NEHAWU and TENUSA

Student Representative Council

MUT Staff and Students

Members of the community and friends of MUT

Family, relatives and friends

Ladies and Gentlemen, Good day to you all. Sanibonani.

I am grateful to you all for being here, when the University renews its commitment and dedication to its Mission, its people and to the still larger cause of communities that it serves. We observe today an opportunity for change – symbolizing an end as well as a beginning, signifying renewal and a step-change transformation into the future of the University.

Kulu dumo elikhulu kimi ukuthola ithuba loku thuthukisa iUniversity phambili, lokwakha ikusasa eliqhakazile. Ukuze siphumelele fufanele sibe nolwazi kanye nesibindi ukwamukela inselele yokwakha isikhungo esiphakamnile lapha eMlazi. Ngibonga umndeni ngisisekelo ukuze ngifike lapha: abakwa Malaza, abakwa Masuku, abakwa Simelane, nabakwa Mvusi.

I am grateful for the trust the University has bestowed on me and humbled by the task ahead. I am heavily indebted to my family, friends and companions for their love, friendship and sustenance over the years. I especially thank my wife Yolanda and our children for constant guidance and support. No matter the circumstances, they are always there for me.

I thank the University community and all its stakeholders for their messages of support. It is a special privilege for me to be of service to the University.

Through good and ill fortune alike, the bright and dark times of its history, MUT has never lost sight of the quest for academic excellence or forgotten the dream and ideals of its founders, emanating from the vision of a tertiary education institution for advanced technical education for Black South Africans, conceived in the height of the apartheid era by the then Chief Minister of KwaZulu, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, and realised through the Anglo American and De Beers Group Chairman's Fund. We acknowledge and treasure their motto: "knowledge is power". We proudly inherit this legacy as their dream is still alive in our time.

We dare not forget today that we are heirs to their pioneering spirit and vision. We stand to excel in educating and empowering the disadvantaged communities they sought to serve.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish our Founding Father, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, a Happy Birthday. He is turning 90 years old on Monday, 27

August. Shenge, we are hopeful that you will be here next year when we celebrate our 40 years.

It is an ongoing quest to fulfil the ideal of our founders, to become mature, resolute and prouder with each success and misfortune. Down the years, progress has been achieved while reverses have also been sustained in advancing this vision and commitment of our founders. Many institutions with a history like ours are travelling the same path. It is incumbent on MUT to be in the company of those who have recorded more success than failure.

We face many challenges, including the one that dwarfs all others: being a historically Black and disadvantaged institution. But this should not distract us from the thorough effort necessary to build the future we desire. We must scale the slippery walls of this enclosure, rise above the parapets, and view new vistas.

African-American history parallels ours and has serious instruction about the limits and possibilities of disadvantage.

The inimitable Toni Morrison, novelist, essayist, editor and teacher, says, “You wanna fly, you got to give up the load that weighs you down”.

She narrates of a group of freed slaves, on a journey to freedom, not welcome on established White towns and Black towns already established. On the way to unassigned lands, digging deep, becoming stiffer and prouder with each misfortune, they found their own settlements. Unembellished stories told and retold taught their children and grandchildren the importance of establishing their own communities instead of envying towns and cities already established.

The imperative for self-reliance, self-belief and building sustainable futures is at the heart of our Strategy 2020-2025 to “To Shape and Own the Future”. For everywhere we look, there is work to be done. Strength in the face of adversity should be our hallmark. In his existential novel *Life & Times of Michael K*, JM Coetzee tells us that if you have a spoon and you can dip it in the water, you can live. There is humanity in drinking water from a spoon. If we wish to move mountains tomorrow, we must start by lifting stones today.

The celebrated Booker T. Washington instructs a later generation of these freed slaves to “cast down your bucket where you are”. A crew on a ship in distress, sends a signal to a friendly vessel at sea: “Water, water. We die of thirst.” At once, an answer comes back from the friendly vessel: “Cast down your bucket where you are”. This exchange is repeated several times, until the captain of the distressed vessel, at last heeding the injunction, casts down his bucket. It comes up full of fresh sparkling water. The betterment of their condition does not lie far from where they are.

We have to start where we are to build the future of MUT. Our primary strategic advantage lies in being a public residential university serving previously disadvantaged communities, with the hub of our academic activities within a metropole with a vibrant multicultural population and a dynamic growing economy. We stand to be a leader in educating and empowering our communities and matching the needs of our region. We should be resolute to face the challenge of being a young and previously disadvantaged university still to develop the infrastructure and expertise necessary to achieve status at the level of a mature research university.

We are committing to change at a time when the growth and fusion of technologies is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres of our lives. Change is evolving at an exponential rather than linear speed and space, disrupting almost every industry in every country, resulting in positive benefits of long-term gains in efficiency, productivity and increase in safe and rewarding jobs, on the one hand, with undesirable consequences such as greater inequality in society and the displacement of workers by technology, on the other hand.

This Fourth Industrial Revolution has serious winners and losers. The gap between the rich and the poor is widening fast globally.

The purpose of our Strategy to Shape and Own the Future constitutes a response to the global trends shaping higher education, the national policy imperatives and the challenges of this Fourth Industrial Revolution.

It is our duty to ameliorate the undesirable consequences of this Revolution for our communities. Our staff, students, and stakeholders must reap the benefits of this change by participating in it and be protected from the long-term adverse effects of

exclusion. This people-centric ambition is the foundation of our Strategy. We aim to Shape and Own a future that works for all, that puts people first and empower them to cope with the evolving world.

To achieve this, we will offer every member of the University community the following key foundational skills and perspectives to provide a foundation for MUT experience:

- Firstly, a *transformative leadership* skill so that we are guided by critical thinking, analytical and reflective evaluation, and the ability to effect positive change. We have to cultivate this perspective in the endeavours of our staff as well as in the educational experience of all our graduates through their learning and their university experiences.
- Secondly, the ability to embrace *diversity*: As individuals and social or cultural groups within the University, we aim to understand and value the differences among us as members of the University. This perspective will shape how we view the world, express ourselves, relate to each other, and our intellectual and moral obligations.
- Thirdly, the attributes for *global citizenship*: We aim to equip our university community members with the technological, communicative, social, and cultural knowledge and skills, as well as the practical experience that will equip them to lead and succeed in an ever more intensively connected global world.

We aim to shape a future that is robust, sustainable and empowering. Herein lies the means to achieving what should be our ultimate collective ambition: to ensure that, in an increasingly complex and anxious world, MUT remains an unstoppable, unapologetic force for knowledge and understanding, for building a more inclusive community, and for the betterment of our shared world. We will be brave in the face of ignorance, inequalities and injustice around us in these times when there is diminishing value of objective reality.

Our efforts will be guided by five performance related values:

- To *deliver* on our obligations to each other, our students and stakeholders while maintaining high standards and ethical behavior.

- To *engage* and collaborate with each other, our students and all stakeholders.
- To *empower* each other and our students to make a difference.
- To *discover*, create and share new knowledge and new ways to lead through teaching, intellectual engagement and use of technology.
- To *sustain* our local and global environment, organizational health and ability to create a viable future.

We will hold these values even if there is no reward attached to them or even if they become a competitive disadvantage at some point.

As part of building the future, we aim to build the requisite academic capabilities, so that we grow in academic stature in a manner that excites the public, ignites the interest and fosters the support of our government and partners.

We aim to achieve a revitalised academic value chain for the fourth industrial revolution by providing knowledge and learning that:

- Advances the professions, business, industry, government and our communities.
- Is aligned to emerging fields of knowledge and scholarship.
- Advances knowledge and understanding among our communities.
- Offers a decolonised curriculum that inspires a truly African identity.

This will be within a framework dictated by our Mission:

“A University of Technology that offers technological career directed educational programmes, focusing on innovative problem solving research and engages with government/business/industry and communities as end users.” (SATN)

Our change agenda must enhance the institutional distinctiveness of MUT and its differentiated role within the Post School Education and Training System as a research-informed University of Technology. Our institutional distinctiveness is underpinned by the following by prioritisation:

- Firstly, the professions, business and industry must inform our teaching, so that applied research and industry exposure enhance learning and student experience.
- Secondly, the curriculum must be work-integrated to provide experiential learning and exposure of students to professional practice. The learning has to be research-inspired and integrated.

Our strategic direction will be enriched by the following choices:

- Firstly, “Technology” is to be the *raison d’être* for us, at the centre of our mission and a competitive advantage. We will focus on research that develops technology as a platform for providing advanced technology based solutions and services.
- Secondly, we will identify and support a few primary academic areas of collaborative excellence in which we develop expertise and a critical mass for academic excellence. Institutional arrangements for these areas will create an environment conducive for collaboration, creativity and critical engagement. These areas include Human Settlements, Environment and Green Technologies, Food Security and possibly Maritime Studies. They will take on different facets within different disciplines. They will house our research and educational flagships and centres of excellence, and, while not restricting academic endeavours in unrelated areas, will provide multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research and educational opportunities and expanded strategic alliances with external partners, both public and private.

Our Vision 2025:

“A transformed, equitable, sustainable and academically excellent University of Technology anchored in its communities”

is an expression of a commitment to: grow in academic stature; be fair and inclusive; grow in harmony with our resources; and grow together with our communities.

We will know if we have attained our vision when: we have pride in ourselves as an institution; both our students and staff feel that the University has contributed to their lives in a positive way; our peers and stakeholders respect and admire MUT as an

institution of higher learning; and government, business, industry and communities actively seek our technology-based services.

This vision puts us at the centre of national development through the production of knowledge and skills necessary for development, linking our own aspirations to those of the National Development Plan. Our differentiated role within the national system of innovation will contribute to the realisation of National Development Plan goal of a knowledge-intensive economy and its ultimate vision to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality through growth by 2030. Through our Mission and resources, we aim to anchor ourselves in our local communities so that they are safe, vibrant, and healthy.

To the University community, I make an appeal to join hands with faith and confidence in the great adventure of building our University. This is not the time for petty and destructive criticisms, not a time for ill will or apportioning of blame. We have to build a beautiful University where those who strive to know may find a home, and those who perceive knowledge and truth may make others see and grow. To achieve this we have to be anchored in humanity as a basis for an institutional culture that builds the futures for our staff, our students and our communities.

This is the prize. No doubt, there will be immense challenges. Our climb will be steep on the long road ahead. There will be times of resource constraints, uncertainty and disagreement on the way ahead. I offer a commitment to robust but respectful debate as part of building the future; and an ability to listen, especially in the face of strong disagreement with those that I lead.

I promise that to be firm, competent, tactful and just. I will endeavour to embrace a leadership style that inspires the University community and its stakeholders, preserves peace and harmony and leads the University to success and accomplishment. I will strive for an engaged, open, and connected form of leadership that practically serves and meets the needs of students and staff as the major partners of the University.

We have to find new and innovative means to engage students and workers who feel alienated by institutional cultures underpinned by normal university governance and democratic processes. This is within the context of a growing trust deficit among ordinary people across the world with mainstream business and political

establishments. We carry a heavy responsibility to create a culture that promotes engagement, dialogue, and tolerance for different values.

I am mindful of the fact that a single individual cannot possibly determine the success of an institution. I rely heavily on the collective wisdom of the people who make MUT such an astonishing place to learn, work, teach and research at. I am sure that under their guidance and partnership we will be able to move the University forward, so that at the end of my tenure as Vice Chancellor and Principal:

- The University will be stronger and better than it is now; and
- I may be able to call all members of the University my personal guides, mentors and friends.

To all our stakeholders, our strategic partners and friends of MUT I ask for support and continued partnership and support in building the future of our University. We are what we are because many of you have partnered with MUT to “make it happen”.

To our donors and supports, we look forward to strengthened relationships. Your thoughtful charitable giving makes a real difference in the advancement of our Mission and in improving the educational and social life of our students.

We look forward to greater support by government, business, industry and our communities in deepening our Mission as a University of Technology.

To the Minister and Department of Higher Education and Training, we look forward to your assistance and support in moulding this University into an institution that will enjoy the esteem and respect of our communities and the nation.

I appeal to our alumni for their ongoing commitment to MUT. For you to now and then visit our campus to interact with the students and staff; to attend our events and then tell your friends, colleagues, fellow alumni, and prospective students about the exciting things taking place at MUT; to volunteer more of your time and your talent; and to place MUT as a priority in your charitable giving. To demonstrate to our students what is possible through earning an MUT degree.

Lastly, to the University community, I accept the challenge to partner with you to strive for the goodness of our institution.

Thank you all for your attention!

Ngiyabonga kakhulu.

May God give us strength and bless our University.