



“Iminingo”

VICE-CHANCELLOR'S COMMUNIQUÉ

Tuesday, 23 January 2024

Entrenching an *Upended* DUT

I take this opportunity to welcome every member of our dear community to the Durban University of Technology (DUT) as we start the year 2024. It is my sincerest hope that all of us rested and recharged adequately during the festive period. With our replenished and reinvigorated bodies, minds and souls, we must continue to deepen and consolidate the beautiful story of greatness we have been writing in the last few years.

While it is Council that approved our strategy-on-a-page, ENVISION2030, and continues to exercise oversight diligently, it is Management that has been steadfast in performing the complex task of coordinating implementation. Our staff in academic and support services, many of whom remain unsung heroes, have increasingly demonstrated their determination to make ENVISION2030 in all its facets not just a strategy in a shelf, but a reality. Over the years, the reality of a *Different* DUT emerged locally and internationally through several sterling achievements.

Our new staff members and students have made the right choice to join a university that is pursuing greatness vigorously. You are all welcome. Rest assured, you are not joining a rudderless, aimless and lacklustre university, but one that is firing on all cylinders on its flight trajectory, which has already made DUT *Different*. I dare say that only people whose character is inimical to facts, truth and evidence, the doomsayers, would challenge our bold claim of a *Different* DUT.

We continue to implement ENVISION2030 feverishly. Bound together by a unique social compact, which ENVISION2030 has brought to bear, we continue to build a university that is unique and compelling. For the benefit of our new staff and students, our strategy is segmented into three distinct yet interconnected phases: *Different* (2020-2023), *Upended* (2024-2026), and *Transformed* (2027-2030). With a DUT that is undoubtedly *Different*, the year 2024 thus launches us into the *Upended* phase. In a few weeks, I will once deliver the annual State of the University Address (SOUA) where I will share important highlights of what makes us *Different* today, but what will make us *Upended* by 2026.

A new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System

We have a quintessential example of a DUT that is not only *Different*, but that is already getting *Upended* as 2024 starts. Part of our Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, driven by SAP (Systems, Applications and Products in Data Processing), went live as January started. SAP is an integrated data management system software. It provides

multiple business functions (e.g. HCS, Finance, Procurement, etc) with a single view of the underlying data. This ensures that single and consolidated sets of data from our database are produced from any vantage point or slice chosen. Up to now, DUT has largely been operating on a disjointed and uncoordinated system with a plethora of manual transactions susceptible to human overriding and error. Like in any new system, there will be glitches as it starts to get used. As they say, the taste of the pudding is in its eating. Using the system and avoiding recoiling into the old one, will help to identify more system glitches. In turn, ICTS and the system implementer will be able to work on and resolve them.

As part of welcoming our new students, the University has organised the annual Orientation Week (O-Week). It is intended to help them feel settled at their earliest convenience. Many of our staff members will be sharing important information during that week. It will also culminate in a Welcome Day to which our new students, parents, guardians and sponsors will be invited. Similarly, Human Capital Services (HCS) organises a series of orientation sessions for new staff members every year as they join us. Please be on the lookout for relevant communication/notices in on our various communication platforms.

Changes in senior management

Let me take this opportunity to announce some changes in the leadership of our Midlands Campuses. With effect from 2 January, Dr Joe Molete has been seconded to champion the Imbali Education and Innovation Precinct (IEIP) as its Interim Chief Executive Officer. The aim of the IEIP project is to pilot and explore an alternative modality of education delivery through implementing innovative, collaborative projects and entrenching appropriate governance structures for a set of institutions which are located in close proximity near and within Imbali, Pietermaritzburg. These institutions include DUT, uMgungundlovu TVET College, surrounding schools, the Municipality and a selection of industries.

In his place, we have appointed Professor Mashupye Kgaphola as the Interim Campus Director of our Midlands Campuses. Professor Kgaphola is no stranger to the higher education sector, having occupied several prominent and senior and executive roles over the years. These include, but are not limited to, his tenure as the Vice-Chancellor and Principal at Mangosuthu University of Technology from August 2010 until September 2016; Administrator at the same University from July 2009 until July 2010; Special Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor and Principal at the University of Johannesburg from December 2007 until July 2009; Interim Executive Director of the Richards Bay Campus of the University of Zululand from October 2019 until June 2020 and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation at the same university from July 2020 until March 2021.

From about mid-2022, Professor Kgaphola has been helping us to implement DUT's capacity building programme for academic Heads of Departments, which is our direct response to the survey we conducted in 2021. With his rich leadership and managerial experience, I am confident that he will help in our commitment to build a DUT that is *Upended* from this year onwards.

Please join me in wishing Dr Molete and Professor Kgaphola well in their roles.

There is special and unsolicited advice I must offer. I advise that each one of us must regularly ask the question: "Why and *for what reason am I here at DUT?*" If we could all respond honestly and positively to this question, and hold ourselves accountable, I see no reason why DUT would fall short of being *Different, Upended and Transformed*.

In conclusion, let me take this opportunity to wish every member of the DUT family an *upended* start of our *Upended* phase.

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