

# VUT strives towards a destination of excellence

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The Vaal University of Technology (VUT) is excited to announce that a new VUT Council was inducted on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> August 2021 and that we are no longer under administration. The challenges faced by VUT and the success of Prof. Ihron Rensburg whose term as Administrator came to an end on the 13<sup>th</sup> August 2021, can be viewed in a two part IMBIZO which is available on You Tube (<https://youtu.be/vINg41sOauc> and <https://youtu.be/NrCvTqJzQRY>). The VUT community thanks Prof. Rensburg and his team for their leadership and dedication in restoring governance, establishing a foundation of stability and for steering the VUT ship back on a course of excellence. We wish him and his family everything of the best for their future endeavours.

Prof. Maggi Linington, deputy vice-chancellor for teaching, learning and student support services at VUT, has been appointed as acting vice-chancellor and principal until February 2022 whilst the recruitment and appointment of the new vice-chancellor and principal is in progress. Under her guidance the VUT ship is in good hands, and we know that she will remain resolute in keeping us on course towards a destination of excellence.

## 1. Restoring governance

The induction of VUT's Council signals a move by the University to ensure good corporate governance and policy making as well as ensuring compliance thereof by all its stakeholders. VUT is excited by the quality and calibre of the new council members led by Ms Refilwe Buthelezi (chair) and Professor Nicholas Morgan (deputy chair). VUT council was constituted in terms the VUT institutional statute and section 27 of the Higher Education Act (101 of 1997).

One of the key responsibilities of council is to appoint a suitable candidate for the position of vice-chancellor and principal, and we expect the process to unfold as soon as possible. The council will play an oversight role in the filling of other critical executive positions and so bring stability in terms of leadership, management, responsibility, and accountability which are critical attributes of running a successful institution. These processes highlight that VUT is committed to rebuilding its future and reputation through strong people, processes and systems.

### 1.1. Refilwe Buthelezi, chair of council

Refilwe Buthelezi is an experienced non-executive director with a demonstrated history of working in the power and water sectors. She has exceptional skills in budgeting, enterprise risk management, process control, power plants, and asset management, strategy, corporate governance and financial resource management, innovation, and digital technology, change and configuration management. She is a business development professional with a Master of Engineering (MEng) focused on Engineering Management from the University of Johannesburg (RAU) and a Master's in Business Leadership (MBL) from UNISA.

Buthelezi was awarded the Keith Plowden Young Achiever's Award for the most outstanding young achiever of 2013 in the field of Electrical/Electronic Engineering. This award is for engineers 35 years or younger who have displayed the spirit of achievement, creativity and leadership coupled with innovative and entrepreneurial action. This award follows from her nomination as one of the "Top 5 Most Promising Women in Engineering" by the University of Johannesburg in 2012.

Buthelezi is currently a member of the following professional bodies: the South African Institute of Electrical Engineers (SAIEE), African Utility Technology Council (AUTC), Institute of Directors South Africa (IoDSA) and vice president of the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA). VUT prides itself on the appointment of Buthelezi as the chair of council.

### 1.2. Prof Nicholas Morgan, deputy chair of council

Prof. Nicholas Morgan has a deep-rooted background in higher education and is specialised in turnaround strategies including viability assessment, consolidations, restructuring and institutional reviews. He has experience in and sound knowledge of transformation advocacy and management; change management; institutional leadership including the statutory and policy environment; the Higher Education legal and policy environment as well as the student and labour sectors and Quality Assurance. His achievements reflect his understanding of key political, social, economic and human rights issues; performance management and leadership development; project management; evaluation and impact assessment including innovation and technology; and curriculum development.

Prof. Morgan holds a Master of Science (Industrial and Labour Relations) from Cornell University (USA) and an MBA (Comparative Analysis of Labour Codes) from Stellenbosch University's Graduate School of Business. His roles have included dean of faculty; vice-principal academic; deputy vice-chancellor: operations; and vice-chancellor at various institutions of higher learning including Technikon's and Universities of Technology. He served as both the administrator and vice-chancellor of the University of Transkei and holds awards and recognitions by various organisations and universities.

## **2. Securing supply chain management**

VUT has a chequered past of both outstanding achievement in many areas as well as a poor track record specifically within its procurement processes

Prof. Rensburg, as administrator, highlighted publicly the pitfalls and progress made in this regard in his IMBIZO video published on 27 July 2021. His report captured the remedial actions put in place through the introduction of a procurement practice note as well as a new policy environment. The outcome is that procurement is no longer the function of requisitioning departments and that supply chain management processes at VUT now follow best practice, substantially reducing the risk exposure of VUT to organised crime syndicates, malfeasance and corruption.

A sound base has been laid for good governance and we are confident that council, Prof. Linington and her team during her term as acting vice-chancellor and principal, will make further progress with the work done by the administrator's team.

## **3. #Changevut - A vehicle for change**

### **Why change?**

The two-year administration period has created an opportunity for VUT to reflect on the past as well as imagine the future. VUT has embarked on a voyage of excellence, where we have left the old behind and are embracing new possibilities characterised by a commitment to good governance and to excellence in teaching and learning, research and Innovation and community engagement.

On the 10 February 2020 VUT launched the #changevut campaign, which we see as a vehicle for highlighting our journey of change at the university and building the VUT Brand. The campaign aims to further build on the good relationships between the University and its stakeholders. Our strategy is an inside-out approach as we call upon internal stakeholders to become the 'Change Agents' to lay the internal foundation for the launch of the new VUT brand during the month of September 2021, and externally thereafter. Media houses will in due course be invited to the launch of the new VUT Brand.

The process of rebranding VUT has ignited great excitement as both staff and students look forward to the new VUT Identity as part of the re-birth of the University. The Administrator's IMBIZO has paved the way for the campaign revealing critical areas of change and starting VUT on the journey as one family by living the institutional values. The #changevut LET IT BE REAL will thus serve as a bridge between the #changevut campaign and the launch of the new VUT brand.

The rebranding of VUT symbolises a deliberate shift from controversy and mediocrity to excellence. VUT has changed course over the past two years and has overcome the efforts of parties who were wishing to stand in the way of change to a new VUT. Led by our new Council with an impressive range of skills in areas of finance, human resources, legal and

academia and our Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal we will overcome the mediocre and strive toward our destination of excellence.

- " **VUT to play a key role in rejuvenating the declining economy of the Vaal region** 16 Feb 2023
- " **Closure of satellite campuses and relocation of some academic programmes to Vanderbijlpark** 13 Dec 2022
- " **VUT strengthens ties with Kenya's Maasai Mara University by signing a memorandum of understanding** 10 Nov 2022
- " **Prof. Mandla J. Radebe takes up the reins as chairperson of the VUT Council** 9 Nov 2022
- " **New executive dean for VUT's faculty of Management Sciences** 12 Oct 2022



#### **Vaal University of Technology**

Established in 2004, as the Vaal University of Technology (VUT), VUT originated as a College of Advanced Technical Education (1966-1979) and was later known as Vaal Triangle Technikon (1979-2003).

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