

VUT Chancellor Inaugural Address
By Dr Xolani Mkhwanazi on the 12th of August 2017
Vaal University of Technology Vanderbijlpark

Honourable Minister Dr Edna Molewa – Minister Department of Water and Environmental Affairs

Dr Jean-Paul Toutain, France Attaché for Science and Technology, at the French embassy

Dr Anna Mokgokong – Hon Council General of Iceland in Pretoria, & Executive Chairman of CIH

Director General of Energy; Mr Thabane Zulu

Chairpersons of Council

Mr Mahole Simon Mofokeng – Chairperson of the VUT Council

Judge Mavundla Sefako Makgatho University

Dr David Mabunda- University of Mpumalanga

Members of Council present

Prof Ahmed Bawa- CEO USAF

Former Vice Chancellor Principal - Prof Irene Moutlana

Vice-Chancellor's & Principal's from other institutions present:

Prof B Kgwadi – North West University

Prof M Makhanya – UNISA

Prof T Mayekiso – Mpumalanga University

Prof Alwyn Louw - Monash

DVC's and Senior Management from other institutions

Ms Khanyisile Kweyama

Executive Mayor' s

Ms Busisiwe Modisakeng – Sedibeng Municipality

Mr Maetu Khaile- Motlasana Municipality

Former Emfuleni Municipality Mayor – Mr Mshudulu

Registrar's from other institutions

Executive Deans of the Faculties

Faculty of Applied & Computer Sciences:

Prof Mabuza

Faculty of Engineering & Technology:

Professor Ndege

Faculty of Human Sciences:

Professor Van der Bank

Faculty of Management Sciences:

Professor Dhurup

Members of the Executive Management Committee present

Members of the Senior Management Forum present

Members of Senate

Members of the Institutional Forum

Union Representatives

Representative from Convocation

Campus Principals

Executive Directors

University Staff and Students present

Academic and Administrative Heads of Departments

Student Representative Council

Partners from the Industry

Prof Gordon Ndodomzi Zide

Associate Professors
Family and Friends
VUT Staff & Students

Today is the end of a very special week.

On Monday, the 7th August we had a Partial Lunar Eclipse as the Earth moved between the Sun and the Moon.

On Tuesday the 8th of August in addition to the parliamentary vote on the no confidence, the lionsgate portal phenomenon was also strongest, this is activated when the earth is aligning with sun and siries, the star bigger and brighter than the sun.

On Wednesday 9th August, we celebrated South African Women's day.

Astronomers have confirmed that tonight, the 12th of August there will be a meteor shower showing in every part of the world, the brightest shower in human history. We are told that this once in a life time occurrence will only occur again in 96 years. Let's observe this magnificent experience this evening.

And overriding all this of course is the fact that August is women's month in our country. Happy Women's month to all the ladies in this hall.

On the afternoon of the 11th July I was thoroughly humbled by a telephone call from the Registrar of the Vaal University of Technology, Dr Dan Mokoena calling to confirm if I had received a letter telling me that the Council of Vaal University of Technology had, at its meeting of June 2017 nominated me to be the next Chancellor of the University for a five-year term.

Needless to say, it took the next 24 hours for me to internalize the news of this prestigious honour. I would like to sincerely, from the bottom of my heart, extend my deep gratitude and appreciation to University Council and

the entire university community for this very rare honor and trust in me to occupy such an eminent role in this esteemed Institution. I wish, in the presence of all of you here as witnesses to declare that I will not spare my effort and ability in supporting and promoting the efforts towards achieving the vision of the Vaal University of Technology.

At this point, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge and thank Ms Kediemetse Mokotsi, who nominated and persuaded me that I was fit for her nomination and, therefore should accept the nomination.

I am also honored to succeed Mr Tokyo Sexwale and Advocate Pansy Tlakula, the previous Chancellors who led VUT with distinction and laid the important building blocks of this young and thriving University of Technology. I wish to thank them for their sterling leadership. I am particularly proud to busk in the achievement and academic excellence of this great institution because education was the greatest gift bestowed upon me.

The Vaal University of Technology focus on Applied Science, Engineering and Technology is very special to me. My own personal passion lies in supporting and promoting education in general and in particular Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education. Thus, this nomination is a perfect match and alignment. NgesiZulu, we say “Ucilo uzishaye endukwini”

It is undisputed that the basket of offerings by VUT are critical for the skills needed to develop and grow our economy and country towards achieving our National Development Plan’s (NDP) vision 2030. These are the most scarce skills in South Africa, therefore there is a huge challenge for VUT and other Universities of Technologies to up both the numbers and quality of graduates annually. Needless to say, that is not an easy challenge at all.

The outcry of insufficient numbers and quality of Maths and Science high school graduates to feed such university programs as offered by VUT is global. However, we have to accept that in our country it is especially acute for reasons we all know, and I will not go into them now. Yet, in my view a pass in Maths and Science at year 12 opens opportunities to a big variety of future carrier options for learners. Access to quality education for

all is paramount. For the poor, it is the door to escape the poverty bondage. Huge investment in educating particularly the poor in our country, can defeat the three evils of Unemployment, Inequality and Poverty. VUT can play an important role in that space. It is our social license to operate in the communities of our presence. It is right thing to do, and it is, in business terms a strategic investment for our future business which is, producing higher output of quality graduates!

I have learned with great admiration and pride the range of programs offered by VUT and Centres of Excellence. Successful universities operate on corporate business model where the VC is the CEO. It is thus instructive that, in addition to benchmarking our performance with other universities, we should also do the same with leading Public listed corporations or companies. We are a Public entity after all!

Matrices of benchmark must include, Corporate Governance, Ethics and code of business conduct, Sustainability, Community Development and Productivity amongst others. I wish to suggest that to take our university, from being very good now, to great, and even outstanding, let's stretch our performance further and benchmark ourselves with the very best in the world! With the caliber of the leadership of council, management and staff at VUT I am certain this is achievable.

It is indeed a privilege for me to walk this glorious journey with you over the next 5 years, I really look forward to it.

Thank you all for sharing this special day with me!