



Central University of
Technology, Free State

PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREE STATE (CUT) ALUMNI ASSOCIATION'S COMMUNIQUÉ TO ALUMNI

Wednesday, 14 August 2019

Dear alumni and friends

Happy Women's Month!

This month we are celebrating the women of South Africa, *Imbokoto*, who contribute to the development of our nation. I would like to take this opportunity to personally acknowledge CUT's female leader, Chancellor Madam Justice Dr Mahube Molemela, for being conferred an Honorary Doctorate in Law by the University of the Free State (UFS) – a well-befitting recognition to a woman who continues to share her knowledge, skills and passion with other women. She is a true *Imbokoto*!

The transformation of higher education institutions remains a great challenge, especially in terms of meeting the employment equity targets to ensure that women progress to senior leadership positions. However, a tangible plan to support this objective is in place.

Dissatisfaction was also expressed towards the Alumni Association for having an Executive Committee (Exco) comprising of eight men, despite the fact that women contested in the elections. The question as to why only men were elected deserves to be further investigated. Furthermore, in the Vice-Chancellor and Principal's communiqué of 13 August 2019, he indicated that a study would be undertaken by a Council-appointed Task Team to investigate the challenges and barriers pertaining to the progression of women, and I hope alumni will be afforded the opportunity to participate in this important investigation, in order to obtain a broad view on such matters.

On that note, if we are already celebrating Women's Month, it means the year is almost over. With only four months to go, we must be resolute. We must question how we are progressing in terms of reaching our goals for 2019, and what we can do to ensure that these are met.

Regarding our goals for 2019, I shared our Strategic Plan with you at the beginning of the year. However, no matter how great our plans are, they will remain plans on paper if we do not have the practical resources and capacity to implement them. Hence, our structure relies heavily on the institution's capacity, and the resources available to the Alumni Association to implement our plans. If these structures are not in place, we are likely to fail in executing our plan.

The university is currently conducting a benchmarking exercise with other South African higher education institutions on the positioning of the Alumni Association vs. the Convocation. A report to this effect will be provided to the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, who initiated this task. It is envisaged that, upon completion of the benchmarking exercise, the role of the Alumni Association, and how it is to be positioned within the university, will be clear.

I am also pleased to share the following positive feedback with you:

A well-organised summit, during which the Terms of Reference of the Alumni Association were reviewed and amended, was held at the Bloemfontein campus in March 2019, and was well attended by alumni, *inter alia* the former President of the Convocation, Mr Cezula. The summit was facilitated by Mr Xaba, the Director: Student Services and Leadership at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), whilst background information on the summit was provided by alumnus Dr Mohale, former Executive member of the Convocation and Alumni Association. Dr Mohale was also congratulated on his appointment as Board Member of the Municipal Demarcation Board by the President of the Republic of South Africa.

In addition, the university conferred more than 4 000 qualifications during the graduations in April 2019, including 29 master's degrees and 10 doctorates – an unprecedented achievement for CUT. We celebrate those of you who graduated, and welcome you to the Alumni Association, a home for CUT graduates. Please join us in our efforts to create the Alumni Association we wish to be.

Furthermore, a very successful Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in May 2019, during which the Terms of Reference of the Alumni Association were adopted. These Terms of Reference will be shared with all stakeholders via the official internal university channels. On behalf of the entire university community, I would like to extend a sincere word of appreciation to all of you who participated in this exercise until late in the afternoon. Thank you also to the staff of the Alumni Relations Office for joining us and catering for our every need.

Finally, the Alumni Association partnered with the organisers and founder of Santana's Dress-up Party 2019 (SADUP'19), Mr Seleke, to host an exciting and excellent suit-up event at the CUT Hotel School, in co-operation with Free Staters, alumni and friends. Please allow me to also make use of this opportunity to urge you to share any ideas on how we can connect with more alumni in your area, or to host an event in your area, with us.

On a sadder note, the founder of CUT (then the "Technikon Free State"), Ntate Japie van Lill, passed away a few weeks ago. We celebrate his life, and the legacy of "his" university in the Central Free State.

In conclusion, a brilliant CUT reunion celebration (homecoming) is planned for 2021. I would like to invite you all to join us, and to be part of the #2021CUT-HOMECOMING movement. Please share this hashtag, and tag our Facebook Fan page, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts. Look out for the invitation!

Stay blessed

Mr Gama Major Cindi
President of the CUT Alumni Association