



Dear CUT Community, Council Members and Stakeholders

The last sixty days have arguably been the most eventful period of innovations at CUT. As we review this period, continuous improvement has been evident in the way CUT has delivered on its mandate - teaching and learning, research innovation and community engagement. The strategic leadership of Council has played a significant role in ensuring that Management discharges its duties and responsibilities effectively. For this report, we reflect on the most significant developments of the first quarter.

### **The installation of the new 3D ceramic printer at CRPM**

Despite numerous challenges arising from periodic student protests at CUT and across the sector, the university strives to be at the forefront of innovation. In doing this, we advance the use of new technologies that will empower our communities and improve the lives of ordinary people in the region.

The mainstream media curiously failed to report about the acquisition of a new ceramic printer at the university, which was recently installed by Lithoz GmbH - a world and industry leader in ceramic 3D printing from Austria. The new 3D ceramic printer is the first of its kind, not only in the country, but on the whole African continent. This is an exciting moment of innovation and entrepreneurship at the university's Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing (CRPM).

It is particularly exciting given that, right here at the university, we see positive developments that the media often fail to report on – again, we should only say this if we indeed provided the media with a media release. We cannot blame media for their indifference – their sometimes negative and irresponsible reporting about the university. Our goal is to remain focused and steadfast on our priority and to set our agenda as we hold hands together towards 2030. I commend the university and its commitment to excel, even now—in the face of challenging circumstances. It is abundantly clear that CUT is a university that is becoming increasingly responsive to the needs of the various communities that it has the privilege to serve and support.

With the acquisition of the new ceramic printer, the CRPM will not only stay ahead of some leading universities, but will also stay abreast of where and how new technologies will be unfolding in the near future. This acquisition is just the beginning of a new dawn towards the next phase of technological innovation at CUT. We commend our government for providing increased investment and continuous support for these kinds of initiatives at CUT. These innovations remain one of the apex priority areas as far as the country's growth and development agenda is concerned.

## **The Medical Device Additive Manufacturing Technology Demonstrator (MedAdd) Project**

The ceramic printer is related to the Medical Device Additive Manufacturing Technology Demonstrator (MedAdd) Project which the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation officially launched on 8 April 2022 at the Bloemfontein campus. This project, funded to the tune of R97 million, has brought small businesses and the university's CRPM together to manufacture medical devices with the aim of reducing South Africa's reliance on costly imported medical devices that many hospitals cannot afford. The Department of Science, Technology and Innovation funded the project through its entity, the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA), which provides technical support to small and medium enterprises affiliated to a technology station at CUT.

### **2022 Institutional Audit**

The 2022 Institutional Audit in conjunction with the Council on Higher Education (CHE) is underway. Institutional audits are used to determine the extent of an institution's capability to use integrated quality management systems and processes to improve the quality of learning and teaching, research and the institution's integrated community engagement. The CHE further articulates the institutional audits as an instrument used to build trust, confidence, and a sense of shared values, aspirations and purposes in the Higher Education sector. The Institutional Audit scope is informed by the vision and mission of the institution, previous audit findings, sectoral trends, as well as other Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) findings. At the beginning of the institutional audit, the scope is to be discussed and agreed-upon. This major project is driven by the Institutional Planning and Quality Enhancement (IPQE) Unit, with strong collaboration from academic and support services departments within the institution. This Institutional Audit will contribute to enhancing quality in the institution, which is a necessary condition for the achievement of our Vision 2030 ambitions. Important dates to note pertaining to the Institutional Audit include 29 April 2022, which is the submission of the institution's Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and Portfolio of Evidence to the CHE. During the period of 01 to 05 August 2022, the actual campus-based and official audit by an external and independent Audit Panel will take place.

The CUT Alumni Association launched the Lesotho Chapter on 05 March 2022.

**Research and Development have undertaken webinars to support postgraduate students and supervisors.** One such was the Doctoral Oral Examination which guided supervisors, doctoral students and selected representatives on how to conduct oral examinations, their different roles and responsibilities, to mention a few relevant aspects. Upcoming webinars include The bigger picture of supervision, Supervisor skills training, Evaluating and examining senior degree-work and other important supervisory tasks, including project management.

**HR conducted an employee engagement survey** to identify and better understand aspects related to the perceived support, engagement and well-being experienced by employees. The outcomes of this survey will be used to enhance the CUT Employee Value Proposition (EVP). An organisation's EVP is a critical component pertaining to the attraction and retention of critical and scarce human resources.

**The employees from humble beginnings to greatness project continues to celebrate employees** who have taken up development opportunities at CUT. This particular project has attracted admiration from significant public figures, including the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Nzimande, who has given a thumbs-up to a LinkedIn post on this project.

The CUT Digital Transformation Strategy implementation is making steady progress across three of the four thematic areas. This strategy is intended to transform the way work and learning takes place within CUT.

**The Vision 2030 statement, strategic goals, mission, core values and the motto were translated into Sesotho and Afrikaans** as part of CUT's multilingual drive, and are available at <https://www.cut.ac.za/vision-2030>

**CUT is again participating in the EDHE Entrepreneurship Intervarsity 2022.** The community was invited to be part of the intervarsity, which caters for four categories. These categories are innovative business, tech-based business, social impact business, and general business.

### **Twentieth anniversary of the partnership between CUT and Aalen University**

For 20 years, CUT and Aalen University have been working closely together in various scientific areas and exchanged over 135 students and approximately 20 academic staff. We will celebrate this successful and sustainable international partnership, the impact of which reaches far beyond the boundaries of the two institutions, in both Germany and South Africa throughout the year 2022.

The festivities will take place under the theme "The Future of Universities and the University of the Future", and will consist of a series of virtual workshops and additional conferences. We will celebrate the achievements of the partnership; more importantly, the festivities will also provide an outlook into the developments in the field of education, research, innovation, transfer, and society in general in the next twenty years.

### **Sharing of research work with MEC for Health**

Academics in the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences shared their vigorous research work in their niche areas with the MEC for Health. The office of the Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement and the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences had the honour and opportunity of hosting the MEC for Health, Ms Tsiu, in the context of the faculty's vigorous research work in various niche areas and its contribution to the province.

Heads of department and researchers in the faculty had an opportunity to meet and talk to the MEC about many innovations that continue to shape the role of the faculty to the university in areas of STEM programmes and research. This interaction is an important outlet for the university to expand on the existing collaboration. The university will forge a wider cooperation in areas such as digitisation, production of medical devices through the 3D printing technology, and others.

### **Sports development initiatives**

The university is committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle through sports development for students and staff, and the cycling club is one of the sport codes intended to contribute to this initiative, while also serving as a launch pad for the country's future sport athletes. The recently launched CUT Cycling Club took part in the 2022 Cycle Lab Maluti Double 90 in Clarens on 9 April 2022. The team consisted of eleven male members who have been practicing as a team since March 2022.

The CUT Golf team recently participated in the University Sports South Africa (USSA) Golf Tournament that took place at Paarl Golf Club, Western Cape from 11 to 13 April 2022. The team ended third on the overall team standing, with Mojalefa Xaba, the team captain, taking fourth position on the individual standing.

## **Regional collaborations**

As an engaged institution, CUT aspires to become a leading university of technology in Africa by 2030. The key thrust of our vision is to forge new alliances within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. It is for this reason that the university welcomed a newly-formed partnership with the National University of Lesotho, Lerotholi Polytechnic, Lesotho College of Education, and Motheo TVET College to collaborate on various initiatives of common interest.

One of these initiatives include the Moshoeshoe Memorial Lecture which the university recently hosted. Each of these institutions will host a series of public lectures by inviting acclaimed scholars who have written extensively about King Moshoeshoe's life, his wisdom, his achievements, and his diplomatic, astute methods of leadership which will remain a legacy for the current and future generations.

In closing, Council will constantly strive to fulfil its effective governance oversight role, as informed by the principles of transparency, accountability, responsibility, fairness and social responsibility, as contemplated in the King III Report on Corporate Governance. Compliance with these principles will be monitored closely by Management and Council, and any perceived or proven deviations will be addressed expediently in terms of the relevant CUT rules, policies and procedures.

We will continue to support academically excellent and financially needy students within the means at the disposal of the university and the country. I want to thank all members of Council and Management for their courageous and visionary leadership, as well as our students and employees for enduring during these turbulent times.

Kind regards

Per: Cllr Matthew Rantso  
**Chairperson of Council**  
(2 May 2022)

per: Prof. AB Ngowi  
**Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal**