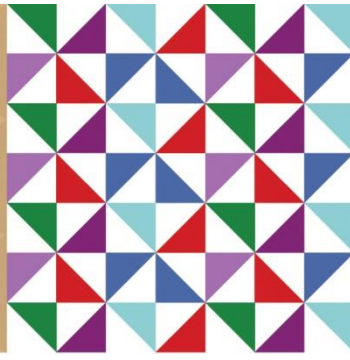




**VICE-CHANCELLOR  
& PRINCIPAL**



## **DUT ANNUAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AWARDS**

Hilton Hotel, Durban

### **VICE-CHANCELLOR'S WELCOME ADDRESS**

30 November 2016

CHANCELLOR  
Judge Vuka Tshabalala

CHAIRPERSON OF COUNCIL (and other Councillors who may be present)  
Mr Wiseman Madinane

GUEST SPEAKER  
Consul General, Ms Frances Chisholm, United States Consul General, Durban

KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
Professor Michael Chapman (A-Rated Retired Professor: Faculty of Arts & Design)

Honorary Research Professors & Friends of the University

DUT Partners and Representatives from, amongst others:

- eThekweni Municipality;
- Confucius Institute at DUT;
- KwaZulu-Natal Government Research Forum (KZNGRF);
- Moses Kotane Institute;
- CASME (Center for the Advancement of Science and Mathematics Education);
- DUT INVOTECH (Business Incubator at DUT which is an initiative of DUT & SEDA established in 2011);
- UKZN, UniZul & MUT management and staff.

DUT Executive team

DUT Staff, Students, Alumni

DUT Research and Innovation Awardees: osingabo

It gives me great pleasure to address you as we gather tonight for the 2016 DUT Annual Research and Innovation Awards Ceremony.

As we all know, until we became a university of technology in 2004, we had not been expected to do any research and engage in producing innovations. Our focus then was just the production of high level skills for the workplace. Where and when research and innovation happened, it was because of the pure passion and total craziness for the advancement of knowledge that those academics had and clearly still have.

To make progress in any profession, one requires passion and a level of craziness for it; more so now in a sector like ours that has so many dispiriting challenges. Without passion and some craziness, we would throw our hands up in the air in total despair and let our universities rot intellectually and otherwise.

Indeed, at some of our universities, libraries, laboratories, facilities and equipment that academics depend on to teach, do research and innovate have been damaged and even burned down. It has been difficult to manage the #FeesMustFall protests. People often ask: who still wants to be a Vice-Chancellor? Are you crazy to take up yet another Vice-Chancellor position, more so at the rather

irascible DUT? Indeed, under such difficult circumstances, who is crazy enough to want to be an academic or a Vice-Chancellor?

It's people who are full of passion for education, research and innovation. It's people who take comfort in the knowledge that the country we love so dearly could never be anything in the 21<sup>st</sup> century without the high level skills we produce, without the knowledge we impart, without the research we do and without the innovations we produce. It's people, whose outputs and outcomes from their intellectual endeavours translate into the advancement of our nation and concomitant improvement of the quality of life of our people. It's people who "think different" all the time, every second, every minute, every hours and every day.

It delights me immensely, therefore, to know that we have in our midst, people who are different, people who "think different". They are the epitome of DUT's genius and ingenuity; they are part of the best minds, academics, researchers and innovators DUT has, this city has, this region has and this nation has.

Think Different was Apple's 1997 campaign and advert that went like:

*"Here's to the crazy ones, the misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers, the round pegs in the square holes ... the ones who see things differently – they're not fond of rules, and they have no respect for the status quo. ... You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them, but the only thing you can't do is ignore them because they change things. ... They push the human race forward, and while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius, because the people who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world, are the ones who do."*

As they walk the campus paths sometimes looking absent minded and forlorn - indeed, looking crazy – they are thinking differently about changing the world we live in. And, indeed, through their efforts it has changed and it will forever change. These researchers and innovators and their forebears are the epicentre of the revolution the world has undergone to be what it is today.

The most gratifying reality is that they do not do all these things for their own sake; but, for the benefit of our broader society. One of DUT's strategic focus areas in our strategic plan is: Building Research and Innovation for Development. I would qualify this and say: for socio-economic development in our city and our region, first and foremost, and in our nation.

The concept of the triple bottom line suggests that social equity, the economy and the environment should co-exist harmoniously in the socio-economic development process. Socio-economic development without care for our environment would not sustain us. Given our location in this city and in this region, the primary outcomes and impact of how the triple bottom line becomes a living reality for our society must be prevalent right here.

The theme for these awards and the annual research and innovation report require that we demonstrate our commitment to sustainable development through our research and innovations. Sustainable development was originally defined as: *"development that meets the need of the present without compromising the need of future generations to meet their own needs"*.

It is within this context that as a University we need to identify what our role is in accentuating sustainable development within the broader University mission of teaching and learning, research and innovation, and engagement. Sustainability is critical in all these areas as we demonstrate our responsibility and accountability to society as a university with unique capacities that could help to develop our country.

As we pursue this goal, we shall remain committed to a number of ideals:

- Our unwavering support for multi-, trans- and inter-disciplinary research and innovation that deal with environmental problems (including resource sustainability e.g. water, energy);
- Our resolve to train and develop skills in our university community that will contribute to environmentally sustainable socio-economic development that will, in turn, improve the quality of life of our people;
- Our desire for all our efforts in research and innovation to lead to tangible outcomes and impacts primarily in the city and the region we are located in and, ultimately, in the broader country;
- Our desire to ensure that in everything we do, we engage deeply with the Quad-Helix partners, namely: government, business/industry and other organs of broader society – some of whom are represented here tonight. The fourth partner, of course, is us as universities in this region.

As part of this drive, DUT has identified a number of research focus areas that relate to knowledge generation in the basic, applied and social sciences and in the arts. Various programmes and projects demonstrate our achievements in these areas.

In addition, our publication profile has grown significantly over the last five years as well as our externally funded projects which we believe will assist us in contributing to innovative solutions to societal problems. As pointed to earlier, building research and innovation for sustainable development requires purposeful efforts in multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary research in various sustainability fields like water, climate change, energy, rural, peri-urban and urban futures, peace – all of which DUT currently is involved in and should be involved in even much deeper.

Earlier, the importance of our Quad-Helix partners was emphasised. We could not possibly achieve much without their support, financially and otherwise. Stronger partnerships with government and its agencies at all the spheres, and with business and industry at all its levels, have to be fostered. These require formal collaborative platforms of engagement that we should establish and that help all of us to achieve our common goals. We hope our partners from all walks of life in the city and the region will walk side by side with us as we traverse this path towards summiting the triple bottom line of environmentally sustainable socio-economic development.

A special congratulatory note to all our people (researchers, students, research technicians and managers at all levels, alumni and partners) who have been selfless and have contributed in various ways to ensure that our research and innovation profile outlook for 2016 is enhanced.

Finally, I must thank the staff of the Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate under the leadership of Prof Sibu Moyo who also currently acts as Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement; the Programme Director and Lecturer of the Drama students who assisted with the logistics and entertained us so well making this ceremony a resounding success.

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