

**Acceptance speech of Judge Vuka Tshabalala: Chancellor of the Durban  
University of Technology**

**03 April 2012**

Outgoing Former Chancellor: **Ms Ela Ghandi**;

Chairperson of Council: **Dr Jairam Reddy** and members of your Council;

Vice Chancellor: **Professor Ahmed Bawa** together with your Executive Team;

Chairperson of the Institutional Forum: **Dr Lavern Samuels** together with your members here present;

President of Convocation: **Mr Wiseman Madinane** and members of your Executive here present;

The President of Student Representative Council: **Mr Mzamo Khanyile** together with your leadership collective;

Leadership of organised labour here present;

Academic and Support Staff of the Durban University of Technology;

Alumni and Students of this University;

Distinguished Guest;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

All protocol observed;

It is indeed a great honour and privilege to stand before you on this auspicious occasion. I was truly humbled when I was approached by one of the constituencies of this great University to consider a nomination of Chancellorship. More humbling was the fact that I have been recalled to do duty to a university born out of a legacy institution that I had an opportunity to serve as a Council Member before the merger. A service to the educational institutions of our nation, regardless of shape and size has always remained very dear to my heart, albeit my retirement.

As a citizen of this country and this province in particular, I have always taken a keen interest in the developments in this University since the merger. The merger of former Technikons Natal and ML Sultan presented the new university - DUT - with endless opportunities to better deliver on the mandate of production and distribution of knowledge in a much bigger scale. This process also afforded the University the opportunity to transform itself into a true South African university at service to the needs of our people. This is a challenge you have gracefully embraced and I am looking forward to contributing where possible in this regard.

I was quite pleased to read about the not so recent appointment of Prof Ahmed Bawa as the new Vice Chancellor of this University. My particular interest in your stewardship Prof Bawa is in the wealth of knowledge that I believe you bring particularly in the area of Community Engagement and Partnerships. It is my firm belief that the university like DUT needs to play a critical role in investing resources and energies to the practical solutions of the communities we come from. I believe universities should take a leading role in nurturing the mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships with communities for the broader transformational benefit of our society. The new higher education landscape has also put universities of technology in the fore front of innovation and technology. I believe this is the space the University should be playing at. I am quite pleased to be associated with such a University.

I accepted this nomination aware of some of the challenges faced by higher education in general with regards to institutional sustainability. I have read in the media about the challenges the University faces at the beginning of the year with regards to student unrest. I have also noticed that the challenges you endure are not only peculiar to this University. I am also pleased that there seems to be commitment on the part of government to assist the universities with the challenges faced.

I also want to pay tribute to the outgoing Chancellor, Ms Ela Ghandi for the contribution she has made in the life of this University. I can only imagine the time sacrifices she had made as the Titular Head of this historic institution. I want to assure her and the entire University community, stakeholders and partners of my commitment in this capacity as a Titular Head of this University. I am looking forward to this working relationship governed by the necessary legal framework of the University.

I thank you.