



Dear VUT Community,

Sixty years into the life of the Vaal University of Technology (VUT), our story is still being written. It unfolds in lecture rooms and laboratories, in the questions our students ask and in the work our graduates carry into the world. Each generation adds its own chapter, entrusting us with the responsibility to ensure that the University they inherit can sustain their ambitions and open new possibilities.

With this responsibility in mind, Council convened on 25 September 2026 for its third ordinary meeting of the year. Its resolutions, spanning academic quality, staff development, accountability and campus security, help shape the conditions in which our university community can thrive. They call on us to give Strategy 2033+ life in the daily experiences of those who study and work here. I share the key outcomes below.

STRENGTHENING ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STUDENT SUCCESS

Council approved seven policies recommended by Senate: the Academic Integrity Policy, Academic Workload Allocation Policy, Assessment Policy, Quality Assurance Policy, Qualification and Programme Development Policy, Teaching and Learning Policy, and Co-operative Work Integrated Education (CWIE) Policy.

The updates strengthen academic governance and the ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI), clarify workload allocation and reinforce assessment and quality assurance. They also address online assessment access challenges and align teaching and learning with Strategy 2033+ and developments in technology.

For students preparing to enter the workplace, the CWIE Policy broadens work-integrated learning (WIL) pathways and strengthens placement quality assurance and monitoring, including international placements. Council also requested follow-up on VUT's engagement with the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) regarding its forthcoming in-service training initiative for students.

SUPPORTING STAFF AND RESPONSIBLE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Council approved amendments to the Performance Management Policy, Sabbatical Policy, Leave Policy and Acting Policy. These updates address performance planning and moderation, leave administration, sabbatical reporting and acting arrangements.

Consideration of the Recruitment and Selection Policy for position levels PL5 to PL16 was deferred pending confirmation that the required consultation, assurance and governance processes had been completed. Council requested consultation checklists and stakeholder sign-offs for policies submitted for approval. Meaningful consultation remains essential to sound institutional decisions.

STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY AND FOLLOW-THROUGH

Council requested Management, in collaboration with the Special Investigating Unit (SIU), to develop and begin implementing a Lifestyle Audit action plan immediately, while awaiting the finalisation of the necessary consultations on the draft Lifestyle Audit Policy; with an implementation update at the next Council meeting.

Management must also set commitments and target dates for outstanding matters, report missed deadlines and apply appropriate consequence management where commitments are not met. Outstanding Council resolutions will be consolidated into the 2027 planning process, supported by a Council resolutions dashboard.

Council further emphasised the need to strengthen segregation of duties across the University and address the root causes of recurring control failures. Our responsibility is to translate these requirements into consistent practice and demonstrable progress.

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE REPORTING AND STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

Council noted the Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Q2 2026 report and approved the Annual Performance Plan (APP) Quarterly Report. Future reporting must show quarterly and annual targets, faculty performance and research outputs, alongside challenges, risks and the interventions required.

Management was requested to focus on four strategic anchor partnership areas aligned with VUT's competitive advantages. Each area must identify its goals, expected benefits, key partners and measurable quarterly deliverables to inform 2027 planning.

Council also called for closer coordination between the Alumni Office and Convocation, broader alumni engagement, clearer reporting on university-community relations and an update on sport, recreation, arts and culture. These areas contribute to the connections and experiences that give university life its depth.

CAMPUS SECURITY AND PROCUREMENT OVERSIGHT

Council approved the appointment of Xilota Projects to provide security services for five years, following the University's procurement delegations. Management was requested to ensure an orderly transition to the appointed provider.

Council also requested a review of probity across the full procurement process, including bid adjudication. Internal Audit's involvement in probity was referred to the Council workshop for further consideration.

RESPONSIBLE USE OF DIGITAL SYSTEMS

Council approved the Information Technology (IT) Security Policy and IT Acceptable Use Policy. The reviews support current requirements for the security and responsible use of the University's digital environment. Staff and students have a shared role in applying these policies in their daily work and learning.

STUDENT REPRESENTATION AND COUNCIL GOVERNANCE

Council noted the successful completion of the Student Representative Council (SRC) elections, which recorded voter turnout of 51.04%, and progress towards establishing the new SRC structures. It also noted the election dispute outcome and the external legal opinion supporting the Appeals Tribunal's decision.

Council supported the deployment of newly appointed members to its committees, approved committee membership changes and requested an additional Convocation representative for appointment to Council.

LOOKING AHEAD

Our task now is to give these decisions practical effect. Policy approvals must guide our work, performance reports must identify where intervention is needed, and outstanding commitments must receive sustained attention.

Thank you to our staff, students and partners for the work you continue to contribute to VUT. As we prepare for 2027, let us build on our achievements with the discipline and care that the University's future requires.

Warm regards,

Prof SK Ndlovu
Vice-Chancellor & Principal