

Tuesday, 18 August 2026

Leading by Creating Opportunities: Professor Ferina Marimuthu's Journey

For Professor Ferina Marimuthu, leadership has never been about a title or position. It is about creating opportunities, developing people and leaving an environment stronger than she found it.

Head of Department: Financial Accounting at Durban University of Technology (DUT) and a Professional Accountant (SA), Professor Marimuthu was recently recognised with the SAIPA Mastery Circle Award in the Leadership category. DUT also received the Partner Award, recognising the strength of its collaboration with SAIPA.

For her, the recognition is deeply meaningful, but her greatest achievement remains the people she has helped develop.

“Seeing former students become successful accountancy professionals, academics and leaders is immensely rewarding,” she says.

Her career has been shaped by a commitment to education, mentorship and creating pathways for students to grow. Through initiatives such as the collaboration between DUT and SAIPA and the 20-week Work-Integrated Learning simulation, she has seen first-hand how strong partnerships can help prepare students for the profession.

Her approach to leadership is grounded in integrity, accountability, excellence and service. She believes that success should not end with the individual but should create opportunities for others.

“Our responsibility as leaders is to open doors for others and, where possible, help them walk through those doors with confidence.”

As the accountancy profession continues to evolve, Professor Marimuthu believes professionals must be prepared to embrace technology, artificial intelligence and data analytics while remaining firmly grounded in ethics and professional judgement.

“Technology can process information, but professionals remain responsible for judgement, accountability and maintaining public trust.”

Her advice to young professionals is simple: focus on becoming a person of value rather than seeking recognition. Build your competence, protect your integrity, remain willing to learn and contribute beyond your job description.

“Recognition often follows meaningful work, but meaningful work should always come first.”

For Professor Marimuthu, her legacy is not about titles or personal achievements. It is about the people, programmes and partnerships that continue to make a difference.

And perhaps that is the heart of her leadership journey: success becomes more meaningful when it creates opportunities for others.

Issued by SAIPA- South African Institute of Professional Accountants

Media Enquiries

Ofentse Letswalo

PR & Communications Coordinator

0769102208 / oletswalo@saipa.co.za

