

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



THE CONVOCATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Convocation held in Kramer Law Building LT1 on Thursday 12 December 2019

Present

The President of Convocation (Professor Eddy Maloka), The Vice-Chancellor (Professor M Phakeng), the Secretary of Convocation (RN Pillay) and members who signed the roll, and whose names are recorded in the minute book.

Apologies

Members whose names are recorded in the minute book.

1. Welcome and preliminary matters

(a) Welcome

The Secretary of Convocation welcomed members present; confirmed that the quorum requirements had been met and that the meeting was duly constituted. He reminded the meeting that Eddy Maloka had been elected as the President of Convocation at the AGM in December 2018 and would preside over the meeting.

The President of Convocation, Professor Eddy Maloka, also welcomed all members of Convocation to the Annual General Meeting for 2019.

(b) Register and Apologies

The names of those present and apologies received are recorded in the minute book.

(c) Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 14 December 2017

The AGM recalled that the minutes of the AGM held on 14 December 2017 had been published on the University's website and distributed electronically and that hard copies were made available to attendees at the registration table, but that the hard copies of the minutes were those of the reconvened meeting held in February 2018 and not those of the meeting held on 14 December 2017. The AGM had agreed to defer consideration of the minutes to the 2019 AGM of Convocation.

The minutes were approved on a motion by Hugh Amoore, seconded by Tom Moultrie.

(d) Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 13 December 2018

The minutes of the AGM held on 13 December 2018 were approved on a motion by Keenan Hendrickse, seconded by Keith Gottschalk.

(e) Matters Arising

Keenan Hendrickse referred the meeting to item 5 on page 7 of the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2018 in which he was referred to as "Mr". He noted that he had sent a request to the Development and Alumni Department that alumni should be allowed to choose their preferred gender titles. He suggested that the practices of referring to people by their gender should be considered more carefully. The Secretary of Convocation proposed that only the names, and not the titles of members would be used in the records going forward. The meeting agreed.

2. Report of the President of Convocation

The President of Convocation, Eddy Maloka, presented his report. The report is appended to these minutes as Appendix I.

3. Vice-Chancellor's Report

The President of Convocation invited the Vice-Chancellor to present her report, which the Vice-Chancellor did.

The report is appended to the minutes as Appendix II.

4. Motions

4.1 Motion on measures for empowering female students in self-defence martial arts techniques

Robert Mokgotsi seconded by Barbara Dupui had moved that reasonable measures be taken to empower female students to be able to defend themselves should they find themselves in such situations where this was necessary. In order to give female students choice of defence and empower those willing to learn to defend themselves, this Convocation

- 1) Recommends and advises the University Executive to conduct research/commission a study on the various martial arts sports that give one the power to be able to disable without hurting an attacker, with a view to promoting such sports among female students especially.
- 2) Having done such research develop a program of training for all willing female students as a free service being part of the sports being offered by the University.
- 3) That until such a program becomes a normal part of empowering our female students, and sports program of the University, The Executive leadership reports back to this Convocation on progress being made to this end.

Robert Mokgotsi introduced the motion which related to the implementation of measures to empower female students in self-defence and martial arts. The motion sought to empower female students to be able to take their security in their own hands should such occasions arise. He said that recognising that until society and especially men change their attitudes towards women, that reasonable measure should be taken to empower female students to be able to defend themselves. He reasoned that the motion was necessary to give female students choice of defence and empower those willing to learn to defend themselves.

The President of Convocation opened the motion for debate.

Professor Feris, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Transformation addressed the meeting and informed the meeting of initiatives undertaken by the University in response to gender-based and sexual violence. She noted that the University's response was informed by research and that the University used a data management system which provided data on where incidents occurred, time periods, and the profile of assailants. This assisted the development of appropriate interventions. Sexual assault by a familiar assailant was more often than not, not the result of direct physical violence. Sexual assault or rape often occurred as the result of coercion or manipulation. She argued that in cases such as these interventions such as martial arts would not assist. She noted that the University's current response was holistic including awareness, advocacy, training and survivor support and measures including prevention. Regarding self-defence she said that the University had launched a pilot project to determine the appropriateness of self-defence programmes. The project consisted of 15 participants trained over a period of 8 weeks by martial arts instructors. Students who participated in the course felt that it was beneficial and wished to continue. As a result, the programme would slowly be rolled out.

Several members spoke to the motion.

Members made inter alia the following remarks and proposed amendments:

- The motion was an emotive one that did not contribute to endeavours to find solutions.
- The motion needed to address the real issue, namely the inappropriate attitude and behaviour of men towards women.

- The motion should be expanded to include the LGBTQ community.
- The motivation for the motion related to initiatives the University had already made in respect of gender violence and creating an environment conducive for learning and research.
- The motion conveyed a powerful message from the alumni .

The mover accepted the comments made and the motion was approved with 34 members voting in favour, 22 against and 5 members abstaining.

4.2 Motion calling for UCT to divest from fossil fuels

Mellony Spark, seconded by David Le Page, had moved that Convocation call on the Vice-Chancellor, Council, the University Panel on Responsible Investment, and the Joint Investment Committee to commit to real leadership on climate change, that is to:

- become the first South African and African university to commit loudly and publicly to fossil fuel divestment
- publicly disclose fossil fuel investments by UCT and the UCT Foundation by the end of January 2019
- commit to phasing out at least 80% of all equity investments in fossil fuels by the end of 2020
- and to report on progress towards this goal at the next Convocation AGM.

Mellony Spark introduced the motion.

She noted that it had been six years since the Fossil Free UCT campaign first called on the university to phase out over five years all investments in coal, oil and gas – fossil fuels – that were the leading cause of deadly climate breakdown.

In those six years, the global fossil fuel divestment movement had grown from a handful of institutions to well over a thousand, including in New York, Paris, London, the city of Cape Town; a whole country, Ireland; and half of all British universities. Most have continued to get the same or better returns on their investments.

The university had made some progress. It appointed an ethical investment task team, and then a responsible investment panel which was now meeting just four times a year. The new Vice-Chancellor had appointed a campus sustainability officer. While this was good, it was nodding to trends rather than leading.

Over these six years, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere had increased from 400 parts per million to 415 parts per million, not just increasing, but even now, still accelerating away from the pre-industrial level of 280 parts per million. This was the highest level in at least 3.5 million years. The human species had never lived with CO2 levels even close to this high. But even as UCT researchers track this advancing cataclysm, UCT has not divested from fossil fuels.

Mellony Spark went on to state that it had been four years since the world's nations agreed in Paris to limit global warming, fuelled principally by burning fossil fuels, but UCT had not divested from fossil fuels.

South Africa was crippled by drought, and Cape Town nearly ran out of water last year.

The Sasol share price had halved in the past six years.

It had been two years since the Convocation AGM first voted in favour of the university divesting over the next five years, but UCT had still not published its current investments, as Convocation then requested.

Dozens of institutions in countries less affected by climate breakdown than South Africa were declaring climate emergencies, but in a country warming at twice the pace of the global average, there was no climate emergency yet at UCT.

The seconder, David Le Page, noted that UCT had the means and the opportunity to do something incredible at very low risk to help seed environment friendly investment in South Africa and to kick off an era in which all investment in South Africa was responsible across all environmental issues and not just climate. He appealed to the University to act immediately and decisively. He appealed to the Vice-Chancellor to:

- commit R300 million, less than 10% of the current endowment, to seeding a new fossil-free ethical fund.
- in her capacity as a beneficiary of the UCT Retirement Fund to ask the UCT Retirement Fund, to give very serious consideration to supporting this initiative, maybe using 3% of the C Portfolio.
- call her peers at Wits, UWC, Stellenbosch and UKZN and commit to seeding at least one very low carbon investment fund.
- Use the stature of her office and profile at a public event to extend the challenge to SA philanthropies and challenge them to pledge 5% of their respective portfolios to low/no-carbon and renewable energy investments.

He concluded that this was the opportunity for transformational leadership that lay in front of the university and that they were able and willing to offer support to the Vice-Chancellor's office in administering the roll-out of this strategy.

Charles Webb moved as a further amendment that UCT commit to become carbon-neutral by 2030.

The mover and seconder having agreed to the amendment, the motion was put to the vote and **adopted** with 40 members voting in favour, 8 against and 4 members abstaining.

5. Motions without motion

The members by overwhelming majority agreed to consider a motion on measures for expanding Convocation participation through technology of which notice had been given but where the mover arrived late for the meeting; and to hear a motion on the establishment of an Executive Committee to support the President of Convocation.

5.1 Motion on Measures for Expanding Convocation participation through Technology

Robert Mokgotsi, seconded by Kalpana Nathoo, had moved that

- 1) Convocation, votes and recommends that the Executive Leadership of the University, look in ways and means of increasing the participation of the convocation beyond the handful of members physically present including an online convocation. This should include research into the potential reach of digital means and any changes to instruments establishing the convocation that requires physical congregation of members.
- 2) That the Executive Leadership take all measures reasonable to use technology to increase the reach and participation of alumni in the Convocation, including educating alumni on the role, purpose and importance of the convocation.
- 3) That the University Executive put in motion measures to increase convocation participation by changing the meeting format to allow for participation via video link, webcast, conference calls or any other technology that would be able to increase the participation from major cities around the world
- 4) That the University Executive, take appropriate measures including proposing amendments to the statute that mandates the Convocation taking place by physical gathering of alumni
- 5) If this measure is not yet implemented at the next Convocation, that the University Executive reports to this convocation and each and every convocation progress made in this endeavour until the motion is substantially fulfilled and given effect.

Robert Mokgotsi introduced his motion. He noted that the physical presence of members of the convocation in Cape Town to participate in the gathering of the convocation had been superseded by two events namely;

- a) The University alumni were spread throughout the world and a requirement for a physical meeting, limited the participation of alumni and diminished their likelihood to be involved in the university activities: and

- b) That there existed modern technology to allow participation of alumni in the convocation gathering without necessarily being physically present.

The Chair invited comments from the house.

Charles Webb noted that it was necessary to disrupt the convocation in the way that it had been run to date. There was a need to be innovative and to use technology to enable alumni everywhere to participate and to democratize the process.

The motion was put the vote and **adopted** with 50 members voting in favour, none against and 1 member abstaining.

5.2 Motion proposing the establishment of an Executive Committee to support the President of Convocation

The Chairperson of the Alumni Advisory Board, Dianna Yach, seconded by Paki Zandile, had moved that the University establishes an executive committee to support the President of Convocation at UCT in his/her decision-making and communication with alumni and establishes an integrated UCT alumni governance structure to best serve the interests of the alumni, supporting institutional alumni engagement and fundraising efforts.

Dianna Yach spoke to the motion. She noted that the primary function of Convocation was to be the voice of graduates, working to support alumni relations engagement as well as fundraising in support of key institutional priorities. Convocation was the largest of the University's constituencies. There were currently two structures representing the interests of approximately 170 000 alumni namely, the Convocation and the Alumni Association. Convocation was a statutory body administered by the Office of the Registrar. It comprised of graduates and all holders of diplomas and certificate of the university, the Vice-Chancellor, deputy Vice-Chancellors and the academic staff, as well as emeritus professors and emeritus associate professors. Convocation provided a platform for alumni to actively participate and critically engage with issues in the University. The President of Convocation did not currently have any executive support apart from the Office of the Registrar. The Alumni Association was a non-statutory body made of volunteers and was served by the Alumni Advisory Board which acted as an executive committee to the Alumni Association. Research had shown that the Presidents of Convocation at other institutions had historically had executive committees to help shape and deliver on their decisions and actions.

The Chair invited comments from the house.

Keenan Hendrickse expressed the view that the motion went a long way in representing the diversity of views in the convocation and improving the voice of especially younger members of the convocation.

Lorna Houston, while supporting the motion, felt that the motivation for the motion was too long for members to consider at such short notice. She suggested that, given the importance of the motion, another way be found of dealing with the motion.

Hugh Amoores supported the motion but proposed as an amendment that members of the Convocation present support the proposal and ask the President and the Registrar to put the proposal to the Convocation electronically to allow the alumni to express a considered view, which in turn would inform a Council recommendation to effect a change to the Statute.

The mover accepted the amendment which was adopted with a majority of members voting by a show of hands.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 20:13

**University of Cape Town
Vice-Chancellor's Report to The Convocation of the University of Cape
Town:**

Mamokgethi Phakeng
Vice-Chancellor
December 2018

DRAFT

**Address to UCT Convocation Annual General Meeting 12 December 2019
By Eddy Maloka, President of Convocation**

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**Address to UCT Convocation Annual General Meeting 12 December 2019
By Eddy Maloka, President of Convocation**

Report of President of Convocation, December 2019

Let me begin by recognizing the Executive Management of the University under the leadership of our Vice Chancellor, Prof Mamokgethi Phakeng,

Members of the academic staff,

Our students and their leaders,

Our Alumni community

Friends

Ladies and gentlemen

1. At last year's AGM of this body I was honoured to be elected to serve as President of this Convocation. This is an assignment I take seriously. I'll certainly do my best to rise to the challenge and meet your expectations. As a student here back then we fought many battles. We fought for non-racialism on campus, we protested against academic exclusions and for recognition as full humans and students with "full rights to belong". I am therefore happy to be back as an active member of this community again.
2. When I left UCT at the end of 1997 to join the "real world" as I thought at the time, little did I know that the path to and through

this “real world” will lead me back to this great institution. I spent almost a decade of my life here, first as a postgraduate student, and later, as member of the academic staff.

3. A University Convocation has one thing in common with siblings – you don’t get to choose who you end up with as a brother or member of the Convocation. We were put together under this same roof by history. As UCT Convocants we hail from various walks of life and yet we are connection through circumstances of the present and the past.
4. One thing I have come to appreciate in my current assignment as an officer of the African Union working in the field of governance on our continent is the importance of trust as a critical success factor in societies in transition – in particular, trust among leaders, and trust between leaders and key stakeholders within countries.
5. Countries tend to fare better and do well when there is a high degree of trust among their key stakeholders. Those with a trust deficit often live ceaselessly in the state of tension and political instability.
6. Where there is a trust deficit, political opponents tend to see each other not as partners working together for the future of their country; but as adversaries and enemies that must overcome and defeat each other. When we seek solutions where there is no trust, we tend to opt for a zero-sum game – I must win everything, and my opponent must get nothing at all. When one loses in an election, we confuse one’s own personal loss and portray it as a loss for the nation; and even threaten to plunge a country into a crisis if I do not get what I believe to be entitled to.

7. I make this comparison because when I read the *Final Report by the Institutional Reconciliation and Transformation Commission of the University of Cape Town* (dated March 2019), I was struck by the fact that the issues troubling the the UCT of today are the same issues that our generation of student activists grappled with in the in the 1980s. As a student activist, I protested against and for most of the issues that UCT students and academics are seized with today. Back then as it is now the need for transformation occupied the center stage. Then, we fought for access to the university as blacks who were eager to acquire a higher education degree, for availability of students accommodation; and against unaffordable university fees, the colonial nature of the university and its curriculum, and against academic staff profile that was not representative of the demographics of our country.
8. Decades later, and despite what we thought was a miracle with the end of apartheid in 1994, the issues have not changed. History is at a standstill at UCT. Is this another miracle?
9. Clearly, the issues in question are resilient and stubborn. They get this resilience from the structural realities of post-apartheid South Africa, with specificities that are unique to the UCT environment. The fact that we are in 2019 where we were in the 1980s about the transformation of our higher education sector, tells us a lot about our own failures as a nation. We thought as a generation, like Kwame Nkrumah did when Ghana gained its independence, that political freedom would automatically translate into large scale transformation of our country. Instead it has exposed how difficult it is to transform a post-colonial society, especially a nation like

ours, which is divided along racial lines. Political freedom has also exposed the vulnerability of many of our good leaders who could not resist to use our newly acquired state power to prioritize transforming their own personal situation, at the expense of our nation, by helping themselves to the coffers of the state. Our reality is another example of how difficult it is to translate well formulated and good policies into action that can truly change our society and impact our institutions positively.

10. I am not going to pretend to have a solution for problems that even the end of apartheid has not been able to solve. But we can learn from other countries, and this is where trust comes in.

11. I saw trust on display at this university when we elected our new Chancellor. I had the privilege of presiding over the electoral college and witnessed how different constituencies of our university were able to converge around one candidate, through consensus – and only voted as a formality. I witnessed maturity in how we all overcame our differences despite supporting our respective candidates and smoothly moved on, in the interest of our university.

12. We also demonstrated trust as university community in our joint response to incidents of Gender-based violence and femicide and the loss of life through suicide among both students and lecturers. The issue of safety, welfare and security cannot be underscored. Some of the incidents highlights and reminds us how much a microcosm of the society we are, in case we thought that we are immune to the scourge plaguing the world outside the gates of UCT life. Indeed we are products of the communities from whence we

come. We must then ask ourselves the question how can we hope to change society at large if we cannot transform the microcosm within which we exist here at UCT, whether physically or in spirit.

13. We will need more trust among ourselves as we grapple with the recommendations of the Report of the Reconciliation Commission whose implementation should interest members of this Convocation.

14. I intend to play my part. I have started reaching out to different sectors of the University - in particular, to the university executive management, the alumni leadership, and our students. I am yet to interact with the chairperson of Council whom I know from my previous life. I have many friends among colleagues in the academic staff.

15. We organized an Africa Day event last May, together with the alumni community. This event served as an orientation for me. It also helped re-integrate me into this university.

16. We intend to repeat this event next year May, perhaps with more and enhanced participation of our community.

17. As part of contributing to strengthening trust among us, I intend to convene an Inter-Generational Dialogue in the course of next year. I will be reaching out to other constituencies on campus and those in the alumni community to work with us on this project that is in line with some of the recommendations contained in the Report I have referred to above.

18. We can build on initiatives undertaken by the university management on inclusivity and racial transformation. Our VC has introduced targeted scholarship grants for women and

postgraduates. The clearance of some students' debt to help them graduate should be commended. These initiatives are positive; they should not be perceived as a threat to the quality and integrity of the qualifications acquired by our graduates. We should have the courage to embrace diversity and integration, to build an inclusive society, free of discrimination of any kind. With a convocation cohort like ours we can be part of the change that is needed at UCT and higher education in South Africa.

19. Our students have just had an incident-free SRC election. They can give our nations a lesson or two in this regard to help us reduce incidents of post-election violence of our continent. They are not just leaders of the future; they are already leading us now.

20. We still have issues that divide us though, among them

- i. Student grievances
- ii. The unhappiness of many among our black academic staff members
- iii. Making this university truly Pan-African and connected to our continent
- iv. Our relationship with the state of Israel, a topic that is a headache for DIRCO
- v. The welfare of our staff and students;
- vi. Contestations over the content of what is taught at UCT; and
- vii. What needs to be done better for UCT to remain a force to reckon with in the domain of research and teaching here on our continent and globally.

21. But these issues, divisive as they are, should not bring us down. They should not lead us to lose faith in our ability to work together as members of the Convocation for the general good of the university. We have no choice but to see each other as partners joined together by circumstances of history.
22. As I said earlier, I have come to appreciate the critical importance of trust among key stakeholders in societies and institutions in transition. This will be my contribution to this university.
23. Perhaps, my settlement of a debt I owe this university. I came here as young boy, and I left a grown up and a professional.
24. I believe that we can build bridges. I believe that if we make more effort to see each other as siblings, we could do better and achieve more. We should strive to treat our opponents with no enmity and rather put emphasis on seeking compromise and working together towards a better university. Trust among us will be key to our success.
25. We missed an opportunity to take advantage of the processes for amending the UCT Statute to propose reforms that could strengthen the Convocation and its functioning. Sometimes, I feel the Convocation needs more support, even though we appreciate the help we continue to receive from the Alumni support unit at Bremer.
26. After some consultations, particularly with the Alumni Association, I am of the view that the President of Convocation Medal for 2019 should be awarded to Mr. Kimi Makwetu. He is known to many of us as our Auditor General who has become the face of the fight against corruption and mal-governance in our country. But he's also one of

us, a member of the UCT community, our alumnus who had to overcome his Bantu education background to rise to the top of our society, and be a model of merit, competence and excellence.

27.I thank you for your kind attention.



Evening of 12 Dec 2018

(30 minutes maximum, or about 3000 words. This text is about 2900 words)

Good evening, Goeie naand, Dumela!

(Overall sense of the year)

Thank you for coming this evening to show your support for the University of Cape Town. We have just completed a successful academic year and it is a privilege to share with you some of the highlights of the last 12 months.

Today we held the first two graduation ceremonies for this month, honouring graduands from the faculties of Engineering and the Built Environment, Law, Science and some Health Sciences programmes. Tomorrow we will hold ceremonies for Commerce, Humanities and other Health Sciences programmes. This month, according to our provisional figures, we will graduate 1781 students, including 104 PhD qualifiers -- the first tranche of the 2019 cohort. The 2018 cohort, which graduated in ceremonies in December 2018 and in April and July 2019, totalled 7396 graduates, including 75 PhD qualifiers. Tomorrow we will confer honorary doctorate degrees on education specialist Professor Jonathan Jansen; chemical engineering and bio-separations engineering expert Professor Georges Belfort and internationally acclaimed molecular geneticist Professor Marlene Belfort.

Today we said goodbye to Mrs Graça Machel, who presided over her last graduation ceremony today in her capacity as Chancellor of UCT – the first woman and the first black African to be appointed to this position in UCT's 170-year history. During her two terms of service as Chancellor, spanning twenty years, she has challenged us to do things differently, and she has demonstrated that lesson through her life. She has stood with us at our most vulnerable times, as our mother, our elder and our conscience – and as the guardian angel of the residence that was named after her in 2007. She is a woman of action and she calls us to be active in our own transformation, as a university, as a society and as individuals. Once again I thank her for inspiring us and challenging us to rebuild our world.

Our next Chancellor, Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe, will take office next year and we look forward to welcoming her at her installation.

(Building community)

One of the times Mrs Machel stood with us was when the university mourned the rape and murder of our first-year student, Uyinene Mrwetyana. The overwhelming attendance at the memorial service on Jammie Plaza, along with the prayer circles, night vigils and protest action that involved so many students and colleagues, emphasised how deeply we all feel about these issues. We mourned as a community and our Chancellor stood with us.

Soon after, another first-year student, Cebo Mbatha, was stabbed to death at a Clifton beach. They were just two of five students in the Faculty of Humanities who died within a few weeks of each other. I mention these terrible losses because they reminded all of us, across UCT, that we are a community, joined with each other and with colleagues, neighbours and friends far afield – including you members of Convocation. In the midst of our grief we have continued the running of the university and provided for the tens of thousands of students who are pursuing their studies, and the thousands of staff members who are here to help those students.

In that spirit, we launched a scholarship in Uyinene's memory, to fund womxn students in the Faculty of Humanities and remind us that the fight against gender-based violence (GBV) is something that must always be at the forefront of our thinking. We have urged students and staff to make use of the existing and new channels created for reporting, investigating and adjudicating GBV cases expeditiously, fairly and in accordance with university rules and procedures and the laws of South Africa. A special ad hoc tribunal has been established for managing and expediting claims of sexual assault and harassment at UCT. In my recent communication to the campus I called on the men in our community in particular to stand up against gender-based violence.

GBV is the focus of excellent research by the [Children's Institute](#) on preventing violence against girls and boys; and a project by the [Gender Health and Justice Research Unit](#) to improve the functioning of pilot Sexual Offences Courts in three provinces. The Safety and Violence Initiative at UCT published a [report](#) in 2017 in conjunction with the Department of Social Development on violence against women and children in South Africa, and co-hosts with the Civilian Secretariat for Police Services an online portal called [Safer Spaces](#), focusing on community safety and the prevention of crime and violence. We also recognise that GBV is a societal issue that requires changes in attitude, especially in relationships between people of different sexual identities. The Office for Inclusivity and Change offers intervention programmes to help students in res to examine their attitudes, recognise areas that need to be corrected and institute change.

Along with confronting behaviours we want to change, we also want to reward behaviours that strengthen UCT. On 28 November we celebrated the annual UCT Awards to recognise staff members whose work makes a tangible difference to the students, colleagues and other stakeholders we serve. We honoured more than 125 recipients of the Long Service Award; close to 100 Ad Hominem promotions; two recipients of the Distinguished Teacher Award: Associate Professor Jeff Murugan and Dr Anneliese Schauerte, both of the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics; and Professor Sebastian van As, the head of the Red Cross Children’s Hospital Trauma Unit, who received the Alan Pifer Award in recognition of his important research into child safety in South Africa over the past 20 years.

We also launched the annual UCT Vice-Chancellor’s Awards. The Innovative Finance Team at the Graduate School of Business Bertha Centre received the Global Citizenship award; Mrs Monique Muller, the Chemical Safety Officer in the Department of Chemistry in the Science Faculty, received the award for Service Excellence; and the Marketing Section of the Faculty of Commerce received the Transformation Award. We are equally proud of the excellence we see in our student community.

At the Faculty of Health Sciences graduation ceremony in April, UCT conferred the 2018 Social Responsiveness Award on the South African Tuberculosis Vaccine Initiative, which helps to develop better prevention strategies to curb the disease.

(Student success stories)

I believe one important reason why UCT is so high in the international rankings is because each colleague exercises remarkable passion to do the best possible job. This results in remarkable students! There are thousands of them, but to name just a few:

- A total of seven UCT students were honoured among the Mandela Rhodes Foundation Class of 2020, joining another 47 inspirational young leaders from across Africa¹ who demonstrate, among other criteria, strong leadership qualities and “a commitment to the four principles of education, reconciliation, leadership and entrepreneurship”.
- A solar-powered, “green” house designed and built by staff and students of UCT and Stellenbosch University took second place in the architecture category of the continent’s first Solar Decathlon

¹ <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2019-11-07-ucts-2020-mandela-rhodes-scholars>

Africa title in Morocco. They competed against teams from universities around the world for the title of best sustainable house powered solely by the sun².

- Although women comprise half of South Africa's adult population, we are under-represented in most business and technical sectors. So I was very proud that women accounted for six of the 11 first-class honours students who graduated in April from the civil engineering programme in the Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment.
- Some of our recent postgraduate students in particular have overcome significant hurdles to complete their programmes. One of our candidates for a PhD in city planning through the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment persevered despite the loss of a parent, terrible financial constraints and the financial failure of the institution he worked for while he was pursuing his doctorate. Another PhD candidate in Materials Engineering completed gender change surgery during the programme. A candidate for a Postgraduate Diploma in Management Practice began her studies just four days after giving birth and breastfed her new-born during breaks.
- Our students' tangible impact on society was highlighted by their amazing initiatives at the annual Student Entrepreneurship Week in September. Soon after, two UCT students won their categories in the inaugural National Entrepreneurship Interschool competition, and one of them, Mvelo Hlope, took home the overall national prize!

(Teaching & Learning)

We have focused on three fundamental areas within teaching and learning: student success; curriculum; and teaching and learning innovation across undergraduate and postgraduate education. We have also paid attention to students' descriptions of their experiences to evaluate current approaches to teaching and learning, including the content and organisation of the curriculum and the credit load that students carry. This is part of a constant conversation in the UCT community about what constitutes good teaching and learning at a research-intensive university.

² <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2019-10-01-best-little-sustainable-house-in-africa>

One innovation this year was the introduction of a short course to teach Khoekhoegowab — the language of the people who inhabited this land before it was colonised – with funding from the Mauerberger Foundation Fund and the Vice-Chancellor’s Strategic Fund.

We want to influence the wider society beyond our campus, by promoting the values that make South Africa a watchword around the world. One of the most meaningful symbols of reconciliation is our first democratically elected President, Nelson Mandela. We established the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance last year³ to promote and inspire strategic public leadership in Africa through multi-disciplinary teaching and research⁴. We are working to build a structure to house the school where African leaders can mingle with experts who can advise on their fields of expertise, and where school children and others can visit and learn about Madiba’s legacy. We have received a very generous gift from Atlantic Philanthropies of US\$25 million towards the construction of a structure to house the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance. That gift came with a condition: that we would raise an additional US\$25 million to match that gift. So far, we have raised 20% of that amount.

Another influence we want to promote is gender equality. Last year we invited applications for five grants titled By Womxn For Womxn⁵, worth a total of R22.5 million over the next five years, to help us rethink our views of gender in South Africa and give us new insights into ourselves and others in different communities. This year we allocated the grants to **Dr Katye Altieri**, who is building capacity for black women and nonconforming genders in the field of oceanography; **Professor Floretta Boonzaier**, of the Department of Psychology, who aims to shift how we think about and conduct research on gender-based violence through her project: “Unsettling knowledge production on gendered and sexual violence in South Africa”; **Professor Janet Hapgood**, of the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology, who is helping women in sub-Saharan Africa make informed choices about contraception and HIV risk; **Professor Patricia Kooyman**, who will train black female or trans postgraduate researchers in chemical engineering, catalysis research and transmission electron microscopy – areas where men still dominate; and **Dr Robyn Pickering**, who has successfully relaunched the Human Evolution Research Institute at UCT as an enabling research environment for South African black women and trans palaeoanthropologists.

³ <http://www.mandelaschool.uct.ac.za/news/mandela-school-launches>

⁴ <http://www.mandelaschool.uct.ac.za/gsdpp/about/school>

⁵ <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2019-08-15-advancing-the-next-generation-of-women-researchers>

Within the context of influencing society, we have followed a long process to consider a resolution that was presented to Senate to initiate an academic boycott against Israel. In March, the Senate adopted a resolution that “UCT will not enter into any formal relationships with Israeli academic institutions operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as well as other Israeli academic institutions enabling gross human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories”. UCT’s Council referred the matter back to the Senate, asking for an assessment of the sustainability impact of the resolution. The result of this process was that last month Senate adopted a new resolution to rescind its earlier decision, citing concerns about academic freedom. Senate resolved not to impose a prohibition on the tertiary academic sector of any nation state. This resolution went to Council last Saturday and was passed by that body.

(Rankings, ratings and other highlights)

UCT now leads, in Africa, in all of the five major world university rankings: Times Higher Education, Quacquarelli Symonds, the Centre for World University Rankings, US News Best Global Universities and Shanghai Ranking’s Academic Ranking of World Universities.

This year the National Research Foundation awarded A-ratings to seven of our researchers, out of a total of 21 A-rating awards across the country. A-ratings are awarded to researchers acknowledged as leading international scholars in their fields.

And professors Keertan Dheda, Genevieve Langdon and Ernesta Meintjes, were elected members of the Academy of Science of South Africa this year, while Associate Professor Sudesh Sivarasu joined the ranks of the South African Young Academy of Science – indicators of the high standards these researchers bring to their respective fields.⁶

This year we celebrated the 160th anniversary of the Faculty of Law; the opening of the Graduate School of Business Conference Centre at the V&A Waterfront; and, last month, the launch of the Positron Emission Tomography-Computed Tomography Core Research Facility at the Cape Universities Body Imaging Centre -- bolstering capacity in cutting-edge research on tuberculosis, oncology, neurocognitive disorders, cardiovascular and other diseases. Each of these milestones demonstrates in a different way how UCT is constantly moving ahead to meet the needs of people in Cape Town and South Africa.

⁶ <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2019-10-11-uct-researchers-honoured-by-assaf-sayas>

This work includes the progress we have made towards restoring nine skeletons to their home community. Late last year we announced that we had found that UCT's Human Skeleton Collection contains 11 skeletons that had been obtained unethically between 1926 and 1931. This year, on 4 November, we held a media conference to report on the progress we had made with nine of those skeletons, whose records indicated that they belonged to the Abraham and Stuurman families in the Sutherland area. This project has involved a team of scientists across different disciplines, whose work has revealed the conditions under which these people lived, possible causes of death and even what they probably looked like at the time of death – work that is detailed in videos and written reports on the [UCT website](#). The work provides a precedent for shaping national policy on historic reburials.

We have welcomed key executive appointments:

- Professor Sue Harrison became the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Internationalisation. With her appointment, the top levels of the university's executive academic leadership structure became all-women for the first time in UCT's history⁷.
- Ms Ujala Satgoor began this year as the new Executive Director: Libraries⁸.
- Associate Professor Shose Kessi was appointed last month as the Dean of Humanities, a position she held in an acting capacity since March⁹. She joins other new Deans who took up their positions this year: Professor Danwood Chirwa in the Faculty of Law; and Professor Maano Ramutsindela in the Faculty of Science¹⁰.
- We created a new position, the Director of Environmental Sustainability, to fulfil our commitment to becoming a green campus. Mr Manfred Braune was appointed to this important post¹¹.
- We bid a fond farewell to our Executive Director of Research, Dr Marilet Sienaert, who retires at the end of this month after serving UCT with great distinction for two decades and overseeing a broad research enterprise that is socially engaged and helping to change lives and communities¹².

⁷ <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2019-05-16-all-women-executive-academic-leadership-for-uct>

⁸ <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2018-10-03-new-executive-director-of-libraries-ujala-satgoor>

⁹ <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2019-11-16-appointment-of-dean-humanities>

¹⁰ <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2019-01-09-appointment-of-acting-dvc-and-two-deans>

¹¹ <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2019-07-18-making-uct-a-living-lab-for-environmental-sustainability>

¹² <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2019-12-02-a-career-built-by-and-for-the-people>

- I also acknowledge the official retirement of Hugh Corder, a Professor of Public Law at UCT since 1987 and a Fellow of the University since 2004, who has served UCT for 41 years. He does not currently hold an executive position, but he has assisted us so much by acting in various executive and administrative positions, such as Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, special assistant to a DVC¹³, and most recently as Acting Dean of the Law Faculty – a position he also filled officially from January 1999 to December 2008. Fortunately he will continue to work at the university for at least another year.

(VC Open Lectures, Inaugural Lectures and TB Davie Lecture)

UCT's public lectures continue to offer thought-provoking speakers and topics.

- Professor Thuli Madonsela, Law Faculty Trust Chair for Social Justice and law professor at Stellenbosch University and the former Public Protector, spoke in August on “Education and the complex shadow of our unjust past”.¹⁴
- The 2019 TB Davie Memorial Lecture was presented in August by Palestinian-American scholar, author and public speaker, Dr Steven Salaita.¹⁵

We hosted six inaugural lectures¹⁶ this year, featuring Professor Edwin Muchapondwa speaking on nature's role in economic development; Professor Collet Dandara on decoding genomes to improve Africa's health; Professor Rebecca Ackermann on rattling conventional thinking on evolution; Professor Adam Haupt on hip hop and scholarship; Professor Shadreck Chirikure on making Africa's past 'usable' for the present; and Professor Ambroise Wonkam on growing Africa's genetic 'library of life'. These examples just touch upon the breadth and depth of the work accomplished at UCT by our researchers, teachers and students.

Of course, there are many more members of the UCT community, including Council, donors, the parents and supporters of our students – and you members of Convocation. Your participation in this AGM is a sign of your desire to be an active part of this community. As I have said before, it takes a concerted effort by all

¹³ <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2016-02-11-vc-desk-appointment-of-special-assistant-to-dvc-petersenreleased-12h00-11-february-2016>

¹⁴ <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2019-08-08-vcs-open-lecture-professor-thuli-madonsela>

¹⁵ <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2019-07-22-the-2019-tb-davie-memorial-lecture>

¹⁶ <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/news/lecturesandspeeches/inaugural/>

of us to keep this university great. Please let us know how you would like to be more directly involved in building the UCT we want to see for the future.

END