

## Convocation AGM 9 December 2021

### Motions received

#### Motion 1

Proposer: Professor Tim Crowe

Seconder: Professor Raymond Jansen

**I respectfully request that members of UCT's Convocation consider recommending that its members, especially alumni, be surveyed (if desirable by UCT-employed "identity") concerning their views on UCT Council's arguably unwarranted recent decision – allegedly on the advice of its Naming of Buildings Committee NoBC and its specialist "Task Team" in 2016 - to de-name Smuts Hall (SH), and the action of the UCT Executive to remove Smuts' bust (already defaced by 'uniformed' members of Economic Freedom Fighters Students' Command - [EFF-SC](#)) from the entrance of Smuts Hall.**

Motivation included in the addendum below

#### Motion 2

Proposer: Victor Kroon

Seconder: Dr Marcus Rademeyer

**UCT Convocation indicates to UCT Council that the Convocation does not support Council's decision to make COVID-19 vaccinations mandatory for UCT staff and students, and requests that Council revokes its decision to make COVID-19 vaccinations mandatory.**

At the UCT Council meeting on 16 October 2021, the UCT Council took the decision that, with effect from 1 January 2022, all UCT staff and students must provide proof of having been vaccinated against COVID-19. I believe that this decision is flawed and needs to be reversed. Below I set out my reasons as to why the decision is flawed.

1. Young people, i.e. students that make up the majority of the population at UCT, are at very low risk from Covid, whether that be severe illness or death from Covid
2. The vaccines do not prevent people from getting Covid, nor do they prevent people infected with Covid from passing it on to other people. The vaccines just reduce the severity of Covid if a vaccinated person is infected with it.
3. The effectiveness of the vaccines wanes quite quickly to such an extent that after 4 to 6 months the protection offered is half of what it was just after being vaccinated.
4. Contrary to what the South African government would have us believe, there are serious health risks involved with getting the vaccines, more so than with other previous vaccines that have been discontinued due to the adverse events reported.
5. Young people in particular have a significantly higher risk of developing myopericarditis after taking the Covid vaccines
6. We do not know what are the possible medium to long term effects of these vaccines are.

7. It has been estimated that about 80% of the South African population has been infected with Covid and would thus have natural immunity which by all counts is at least as good as the immunity achieved from taking the vaccine.
8. Some people may already have immunity against Covid 19 due to exposure to other viruses
9. Mandatory schemes pose a significant threat to fundamental freedoms
10. Most of the transmission of the virus occurs through contact with people who are symptomatic and asymptomatic spread is highly rare.
11. Vaccines have never been mandated as a prerequisite for employment in South Africa or for attendance at educational institutions, even for diseases that pose a greater threat than Covid 19.
12. The manufacturers of the vaccines do not trust their products enough to “put their money where their mouth is” and accept any potential liability for an adverse event arising from the vaccines

### **Addendum to the motion 1 by Professor T Crowe**

Below is the motivation submitted by Professor Crowe:

This is for three reasons:

First, Smuts is arguably the historically most constructively [influential](#) South African of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and played key roles in the establishment and development of UCT. Evidence of this is provided in Appendix 1.

Second, in 2016, if the NoBC or Council made any decisions vis-à-vis SH, they failed to follow proper procedure as outlined in its [mandate](#) in four ways.

1. The NoBC did not acknowledge the receipt of (or reply to) nor appear to consider a 4000-word, evidence-based, fully referenced [proposal](#) from UCT Assoc. Prof. Johann Hattingh: **Submission to the University of Cape Town Task Team on the Naming of Buildings, Rooms, Spaces and Roads with regard to the possible renaming of Smuts Hall**. He argued for retaining the name, recommending that “measures should be taken by the University to contextualise the naming of the building in an inclusive and educative environment that is conducive to critical engagement with the history of South Africa, the University and the person of Jan Smuts”. However, when nothing was announced in the public domain by UCT and/or the NoBC vis-à-vis SH in 2016 and ensuing years, Hattingh assumed (outlined in a 21 August 2021 e-mail) that the NoBC made no recommendations vis-a-vis de/re-naming Smuts Hall.
2. There is no evidence in the public domain that the 2016 NoBC received any other proposals, pro- or con-, vis-à-vis de/re-naming SH in 2016. According to an e-mail dated 8 September 2021, Dr Maanda Mulaudzi, chair of the NoBC’s specialist “Task Team”: “I know that the Task Team gave no advice in 2016 to the NoBC about either the removal or name change to Smuts Hall.”
3. During a virtual webinar, **RENAMING PLACES AND SPACES AT UCT**, held on 7 July 2021 and chaired by UCT Vice-Chancellor Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng and current NoBC Chairperson

and member of Council Malcolm Campbell, Campbell maintained that, in the case of SH back in 2016, the name appears to have been discussed. However, he made no mention of formal proposals, thorough consultation and debate or decisions for de/re-naming SH that followed the NoBC's mandate. *He also mentioned that the most numerous responses vis-à-vis de/re-naming Smuts Hall were from alumni who were also opposed to the name change.*

4. This is in sharp contrast to an e-mail communication dated 27 June 2021 from, UCT's Registrar and Secretary to Council, Royston Pillay: "I confirm that [on 19 June 2021] Council considered a recommendation from the NoBC to rename the Smuts Hall. This followed a process that started in 2016 when **notice was given to the University community** that the Smuts Hall was one of the buildings identified to be **renamed**. Comments received were **considered** by the NoBC. The [current] Council noted the advice from the NoBC that there was previous call for comments, and noted the recommendation of the NoBC that the previous consultation of 2016 need not be repeated." Emphasis mine.

Third, until 2021, no evidence has been presented that NoBC received any new proposals vis-à-vis SH in particular after 2016. However (according to a 10 June [piece](#) by UCT Council member Michael Cardo), information from press reports indicated that the NoBC entertained a two-page, 465-word [proposal](#) dated 10 May from the EFF-SC-dominated SRC to de-name SH. This was four weeks before the Council meeting that eventually reviewed the 2021 NoBC's subsequent recommendation. This proposal devoted fewer than 140 words to Smuts and the Hall. It was submitted on the letterhead of the "EFF-SC-led" STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC) and was signed by Economic Freedom Fighters Students' Command ([EFF-SC](#)) member Ukhanyo Mdakane - Residences and Housing Co-ordinator Students' Representative Council Member. On 29 June 2021, the EFF-SC issued a statement concerning the "resignation of SRC members" revealing that Mdakane "has been alleged to have committed sexual offenses". According to the press reports, the NoBC had supported the proposal and would make its recommendation to the UCT Council at the Council's next meeting on 19 June.

In brief, the proposal alleged that:

1. SH is a "centre of colonial prominence on Campus";
2. its "architecture and space negates Black humanity and dignity"; and
3. "its title contributes to the character of its inhabitants" - "private school matriculants and a greater number of white students;"

There were no supporting references, testimonials, statistical tables, appendices or documents. The only 'evidence' is a statement:

"Whether the **perception is true or not**, it creates the reality." Emphasis mine.

I close with my personal assessment of Smuts and telling messages from one male and two female highly regarded Black activists.

Smuts was a self-absorbed, brilliant intellectual, internationalist visionary leader of his time. At times, he was a ruthless globally and nationally prominent leader (in all senses of the word), determined to apply his politically Holistic vision locally and internationally. His consummate [political skill](#) was not in inspiring

leadership that united a deeply divided white minority. In this he failed dramatically. Rather, it lay in the art of survival that kept a complicated and divided nation together in the vain hope of transcending its brutal parochialism. His paternalistic racist, adamant segregationist and "[Western Christian Civilization](#)" views were irreversibly established during his 12 pre-school years on the family farm and 5 school-years at pre-Stellenbosch University. They were crystalized during his time at Cambridge University. His political life was founded on anti-imperialism and, subsequently, on [Realpolitik](#) that deliberately excluded people of colour ([PoC](#)) AND pre-apartheid white supremacists led by JBM Hertzog and DF Malan. In 1948, by creating and supporting the recommendations of the [Fagan Commission](#), 78 year-old Smuts and his younger and much more liberal designated successor [Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr](#) finally tried to set South Africa firmly on a long path towards integration. Sadly, they lost an arguably rigged election to the extremely anti-black racist National Party who designed, 'legalized' and aggressively implemented Apartheid.

In short, never did one man do so much for so many people only to be character assassinated by so few.

During the late 1940s, [Eduardo Mondlane](#) was a popular Mozambican student at Witwatersrand University and future leader of Mozambique's liberation movement, FRELIMO. His continued attendance at Wits was supported politically by Smuts. Some years later, participating on a Chicago radio program about South Africa, Mondlane spoke warmly of the latter-day Smuts' "racial moderation". He argued that Smuts and Hofmeyr "pursued long-term integration" and that South Africans "must work with what they have."

Poet, memoirist, and civil rights icon [Maya Angelou](#): "History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again."

Journalist [Nikole Hannah-Jones](#): "You can't pick and choose what parts of history we think are important and which ones aren't."

### **Appendix 1. Synopsis of an even-handed [biography](#) in South African History Online**

Politician, world-famed statesman, soldier, naturalist, philosopher and former Prime Minister of South Africa – 1870-1950 - P.O.B. Bovenplaats, Riebeeck West, Cape Colony, South Africa

Despite beginning formal school education only at the age of 12, he matriculated with distinction at the Victoria College (forerunner of Stellenbosch University) after only five years of formal education. In 1891, he gained a double first in combined literature and sciences degree at the University of the Cape of Good Hope (forerunner of University of South Africa - UNISA), earning a scholarship to study at Cambridge University. He studied law at Christ's College, topping the lists for all intercollegiate examinations. In 1894, he achieved the unprecedented distinction of first place in both parts of the law course.

After returning to South Africa, he practised law in Cape Town and became involved with politics. He supported of the Rhodes-Hofmeyr partnership until he was disillusioned by the Jameson Raid.

He moved north to the South African Republic (Transvaal) and, at the age of 28, became State Attorney and key advisor to the Executive Council of President Paul Kruger.

During the Second South African War, he was deeply involved in planning and executing guerrilla warfare against British Imperialists, distinguishing himself as a military strategist and general. He played a key role in the Vereeniging Peace Conference in 1902 as legal adviser to the Transvaal government. This ended the genocide-like treatment of both whites and blacks in British concentration camps.

By 1907, as a cabinet minister and colonial secretary in the government in the Transvaal Colony, he was a key architect of political union of the four British colonies in South Africa and was largely responsible for the drafting of the Union of South Africa's constitution.

In 1908, Smuts negotiated with MK Gandhi to achieve an agreement (the Gandhi-Smuts Compromise) to settle disputes with the Indian population in South Africa vis-à-vis the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance of 1906.

Due to his reconciliatory attitude towards the British and - latterly PoC - he was branded as a traitor by his Afrikaner kinsmen, especially Nationalists.

During WW1, he led as a field general destroying the German African Empire and serving on the Allied War Cabinet. He also played a key role (with Prof. 'Jock' [Beattie](#)) to broker the 'deal' to locate CJ Rhodes' envisioned 'national' university in Cape Town and not Johannesburg and helped to persuade major colonialist [Randlords](#) Sir [Otto Beit](#) and Sir [Julius Wernher](#) to fund its construction.

He was instrumental in the creation of an independent British Royal Air Force (RAF) that later prevented British defeat during WW2.

After WW2, he helped to design and set into place a process that transformed the British Colonial Empire into a Commonwealth of self-governing, effectively independent nations.

In 1919, he attended the WW1 Paris Peace Conference, argued for less punishing demands on Germany and, following Louis Botha's death in August, became Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa.

He also played a key role in the drafting of the constitution of the League of Nations, forerunner of the United Nations.

As Prime Minister of South Africa during the latter 19 'teens' and early 20s, he took action against both rebellious 'whites' and 'blacks' to prevent the dissolution of the Union.

Because of this, Smuts lost the next election in 1924 to white-supremacist Afrikaner J.B.M. Hertzog and his National Party (NP).

During his time as the political opposition, Smuts made important contributions to the field of science. One of these contributions was Smuts' proposal of **Holism**. His book, *Holism and Evolution* (1926) developed this concept as a philosophy, which accorded considerable status to the worth of the human personality and its evolution. Contemporary thinkers considered holism an important contribution to the human sciences, and the current UCT leadership regularly uses the term "holistic".

In 1930, the British Association for the Advancement of Science honoured him by requesting him to take up office as their president the following year. Smuts' address was titled "The Scientific World Picture of Today" and his contribution made mention of developments in physics, nuclear physics and astronomical theory.

In addition to his contributions to philosophy, Smuts also became an authority on the grasses of the South African veld, delivered addresses to notable societies and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. Smuts also wrote a book on American poet Walt Whitman: **Walt Whitman: a study in the evolution of personality.**

In 1939, Smuts regained the premiership when Hertzog motioned for South Africa to remain neutral during WW 2. His support for, and defeat of, the anti-Nazi allies alienated many more Afrikaners - even people within his government. His contributions as the member of the war cabinet closest to Winston Churchill earned him promotion as field marshal of the British Army.

In 1946, in response to justifiable grievances of the Native Representative Council, the African National Congress (ANC), the Transvaal Indian Council and other organisations, Smuts – then in his late 70s - established (and supported the recommendations of) the Fagan Commission to ameliorate laws relating to urban Blacks, pass laws, and the socio-economic circumstances of migrant workers. In Smuts' own words: "The idea that the Natives must all be removed and confined in their own kraals is in my opinion the greatest nonsense I have ever heard."

To counter this, the National Party appointed the Sauer Commission to formulate guidelines for a future apartheid policy towards other "races".

Had Smuts and his much more liberal designated successor Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr – who died suddenly and prematurely - won the May 1948 general election, the relaxation of current laws requiring 'racial' segregation could have promoted the creation of a legally non-racial South Africa many decades earlier without a tragic loss of life and peace of mind. With regard to universities, Hofmeyr's most famous TB-Davie-like quote is: "there should know no distinctions of class, wealth, race or creed".

In 2004, Smuts was ranked by voters in an opinion poll held by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). He placed 8<sup>th</sup> among the top hundred Greatest South Africans of all time. Other members of the 'Top 10' include :1. Nelson Mandela, 2. Dr Christiaan Barnard, 3. F W De Klerk, 4. Mahatma Ghandi, 5. Nkosi Johnson, 6. Winnie Madikizela Mandela, 7. Thabo Mbeki, 8. Gary Player and 10. Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Apartheid premiers did not fare well: Hendrik Verwoerd 19, JBM Hertzog 83 and PW Botha 87.