

## DISTINGUISHING UCT

### The University of Cape Town's Strategic Planning Framework 2016 – 2020

#### Preamble

The 2016-2020 Strategic Planning Framework has been developed against the backdrop of widespread social action on campuses throughout the country. The focus of the social action has been the inequalities, prejudices and structural disadvantages that continue to characterise South African society and our universities. The Planning Framework is organised around five broad goals and high level institution-wide objectives to effect improvements in the areas of research, teaching and learning, internationalisation, and social responsiveness while infusing all of these with the transformation agenda. Many of the objectives are drawn from Senate-approved Teaching and Learning, and Research Strategies, and the policies on internationalisation and social responsiveness.

The five goals are:

- Goal 1: To forge a new inclusive identity that reflects a more representative profile of students and staff, and the cultures, values, heritage and epistemologies of the diversity of UCT's staff and students
- Goal 2: To promote UCT as a vibrant and supportive intellectual environment that attracts and connects people from all over the world and advances the status and distinctiveness of scholarship in Africa
- Goal 3: To advance UCT as a research-intensive university that makes a distinctive contribution to knowledge, locally and globally
- Goal 4: To renew and innovate in teaching and learning - improving student success rates, broadening academic perspectives, stimulating social consciousness and cultivating critical citizens
- Goal 5: To enhance the scope, quality and impact of engaged scholarship<sup>1</sup> with an emphasis on addressing development and social justice

The focus on transformation aims to build on the best of UCT's present and past, while interrogating the historical values and assumptions that inform our institutional culture, and our ways of knowing, seeing and teaching. This interrogation of coloniality should lead us to addressing practices which are experienced as exclusionary by marginalised identities within UCT and imagining alternative practices, which advance social justice and contribute to sustainable development. Accordingly, the plan signals UCT's commitment to understand, debate and engage with a process of decolonisation.

The strategic planning framework contains a set of high level institution-wide objectives. Detailed plans based on the institution-wide objectives, with targets, will be developed by the professional support departments and faculties and in a manner that is appropriate to their unique contexts. The faculty and departmental plans will be developed in consultation with key constituencies to ensure that they are responsive to the needs of stakeholders.

An appendix (to be finalised once the plan is adopted by Council) will contain a set of indicators aligned to the high level objectives within which specific measures and/or targets will be set after all the plans are approved. The University Strategy Forum and Council will review progress reports annually. The members of the Executive, the Deans and the Executive Directors will set performance objectives in line with the Strategic Planning Framework. These objectives will be monitored through the Performance Management System. In this way the leadership of the University will be held accountable for the attainment of the objectives in the Strategic Planning Framework.

Responding to the transformation imperatives and ongoing efforts to advance our teaching and learning and research agendas, coincides with the growing problem of funding of higher education nationally, combined with new constraints on fee increases. Obviously, ensuring the financial sustainability of the University is critical for our long-term survival.

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<sup>1</sup> Engaged scholarship is defined as the utilisation of an academic's scholarly and/or professional expertise, with an **intentional public purpose or benefit** (which) demonstrates engagement with **external (non-academic) constituencies**. It can help to generate new knowledge, promote knowledge integration, the application of knowledge, or the dissemination of knowledge.

Austerity, greater efficiencies, and new income generation are necessary to put the institution on course towards generating a surplus that can be used for the strategic investments required to meet the goals of the plan. The current financial plans are expected to ensure that we can invest at least R150m over the five year plan in new strategic programmes. In fact, though, many of the strategies contained in this plan will not require additional financial resources, but rather, changes in approach, structures and practices. We also anticipate that the alignment of this plan with Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) priorities (for research and teaching development and funding the pipeline of future black academics) will protect the ring-fenced DHET Development grants that we receive.

**Goal 1: To forge a new inclusive identity that reflects a more representative profile of students and staff, and the cultures, values, heritage and epistemologies of the diversity of UCT's staff and students**

**High level objectives**

***Institutional culture***

- Affirm the dignity, contributions and experiences of all, with specific attention to those who have been historically marginalised in the university community
- Create an affirming and inclusive teaching, learning and research environment for gender and sexual diversities
- Identify and address institutional policies and practices that reproduce power relations based on historical privilege, colonialism, and apartheid, and which impede transformation
- Adopt a zero-tolerance approach to any form of unfair discrimination, harassment, sexual violence, and behaviour that demeans others
- Reinforce a new inclusive identity for UCT through an appropriate display of artworks, symbols, choice of names of buildings, and use of indigenous SA languages
- Review the composition of all institution-wide, faculty and departmental committees to ensure representation along racial and gender lines and for other marginalised identities
- Review the mechanisms for enabling and empowering student participation in the governance of the university
- Build capacity to implement the strategic plan, especially amongst the leaders of the institution in the academic and professional and support areas

***Students***

- Have a student and graduate profile which is more diverse and representative of the population at undergraduate and postgraduate levels with greater proportions of black, socio-economically disadvantaged and disabled students
- Continue to improve on educational and psychosocial support for students and adapt mainstream programmes to address the unequal schooling of those admitted, in a manner that avoids stigmatisation and labelling

***Staff***

- Attain our institutional employment equity targets to place UCT on a clear trajectory towards a more representative profile of academic and PASS staff at all levels and of institutional leadership
- Invest in growing the pipeline of black, women and disabled academics and managers
- Attract more black, women and disabled South African postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows to broaden the pool of potential future academics
- Attract, recruit and retain African<sup>2</sup> South African academics and professional support staff
- Integrate the previously outsourced workers into the UCT community
- Nurture a labour relations environment that embodies fair and equitable treatment of all who work in the University

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<sup>2</sup> The classification used here is aligned to the language in the Employment Equity Plan.

**Goal 2: To promote UCT as a vibrant and supportive intellectual environment that attracts and connects people from all over the world and advances the status and distinctiveness of scholarship in Africa**

**High level objectives**

- Promote international partnerships across the globe, across the African continent and in emerging economies that support the development of research, staff and student exchanges, and other strategic goals such as advocacy, access to funding, developing networks and expertise and building reputation
- Implement a significant number of shared training programmes with African universities towards developing the next generation academics for the continent
- Implement international joint degrees, co-supervision of PhD candidates and exchanges, providing doctoral and postdoc fellows with international experience, and where funding allows, for other postgraduate and undergraduate students
- Build expertise on questions of particular relevance to the African continent
- Identify and publicise areas where UCT is particularly strong in studying challenges facing the continent, or in bringing an African lens to global problems; and identify where such expertise is perceived to be lacking and should be strengthened
- Enhance global visibility for UCT's scholars through open scholarship and appropriate communication strategies
- Promote strategic stewardship of a significant number of distinctive continental archives of photographs and film, audio-recordings, manuscripts, maps, music, art and artefacts from a range of disciplines
- Recruit a more geographically diverse spread of international students in full degree, block release, and Semester Study Abroad programmes and increase their numbers

**Goal 3: To advance UCT as a research-intensive university that makes a distinctive contribution to knowledge, locally and globally**

**High level objectives**

- Recruit and retain scholars who are leaders in their fields and who will contribute positively to the research strategy of the University
- Provide seed funding for strategically selected new collaborations that include a global south partner, and three or four-way international partnerships, to advance the quality, impact and profile of our research, and to access global research resources
- Challenge our academics to develop new thinking about the problems that should most urgently be addressed by us as an African university, and feed this thinking not only into published research and innovative products and solutions, but also into the curriculum
- Build the capacity for staff across all disciplines to conduct research requiring analysis of high volumes of complex data
- Enhance the environment for soft-funded research units
- Provide our researcher corps with tailored 21st-century, technologically-enabled research support
- Accelerate the pipeline of future academics at UCT and on the continent through holistic professional development opportunities for our postgraduate cohort as well as our young appointees (soft-funded and GOB) with particular focus on emerging black and women scholars
- Improve the completion rate and reduce the average time to completion of PhD students
- Provide more opportunities for undergraduate students to undertake research during their degrees

**Goal 4: To renew and innovate in teaching and learning - improving student success rates and well-being, broadening academic perspectives, stimulating social consciousness and cultivating critical citizens**

**High level objectives**

***Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment***

- Cater for wide diversity of educational preparedness particularly at entry level in ways which do not alienate or stigmatize students
- Improve the curriculum and pedagogy in courses that impede student success for black students in particular
- Minimise disparities between success rates of black and white students
- Incorporate scholarship from Africa and the global south into curricula
- Interrogate ways in which current curricula may marginalise particular identities and perpetuate dominant cultural assumptions and philosophies of knowledge
- Enable access for disabled students and mainstream disability issues in the curriculum
- Expose students to ways of thinking beyond their own disciplinary specialisations
- Provide opportunities for students to engage around contemporary local and global political and social issues and the continued legacy of apartheid and colonialism
- Expand opportunities for developing entrepreneurial skills
- Recognise and utilise the diverse linguistic, cultural and experiential resources which students bring to the classroom
- Expand opportunities for, and encourage, students to acquire communicative competence in a South African indigenous language as well as opportunities for students to learn other major world languages - especially those in use in the rest of Africa

***Staff:***

- Equip staff to use critical pedagogies to interrogate their assumptions about the curriculum and their students, and to work effectively in diverse classrooms
- Encourage staff to use reflective teaching practices, and multiple forms of technology to enhance learning and programme delivery
- Review the status of teaching in the ad hominem promotion process
- Play a leading role in advancing the scholarship of teaching

***Learning environments***

- Recognize students who participate actively and reflexively in extra-curricular and student leadership activities
- Promote opportunities for a balanced range of career opportunities, including the non-governmental, public and start-up sectors; facilitate internships and post-university transition to the workplace
- Increase access for students to mental health services
- Strengthen support provided in the residences to facilitate learning success and an holistic learning experience  
Increase access to and success in quality education – through on-line delivery both on-campus and off-campus – to contribute to the reputation, strategic goals and sustainability of the university.

## **Goal 5: To enhance the scope, quality and impact of engaged scholarship with an emphasis on addressing development and social justice**

### **High level objectives**

- Increase the number of academic staff who engage with the public sector, industry, non-governmental and community-based organisations to inform and evaluate policy, strategies and enhance professional practices
- Promote the establishment of long-term relationships and mechanisms for multi-stakeholder engagement to share research findings, test new insights, evidence and innovations and engage collectively around highly complex societal problems and economic development
- Enhance contributions to public-sector services or industry-provided services; and/or to support the needs, aspirations and development challenges of community-based organisations (including NGOs and community-based organisations), via innovations, systems development, technical support, service-learning or community-based education
- Provide opportunities for staff and students to learn how to build reciprocal relationships with external constituencies in different social contexts and apply their learning in practical projects as part of the formal curriculum
- Improve the visibility of engaged scholarship at UCT
- Promote the scholarship of engagement including evaluating the societal impact and quality of engaged scholarship
- Strengthen faculty involvement in the work of the UCT Knowledge Co-op
- Expand access for students to the Global Citizenship Programme and/ or other outreach programmes, and increase opportunities for local and international students to engage with community-based activities
- Expand the provision of continuing education courses and lectures, opportunities for public dialogue, and on-line courses

### **Enabling systems, policies and procedures**

To ensure that systems and resources are available to achieve the goals in the five focus areas, the following objectives are set in respect of support systems.

#### **Financial sustainability**

- Manage the net reduction of the University's budgeted costs by at least 4% by the end of 2019
- Develop diversified revenue streams and funding sources
- Develop new business models for future financial sustainability
- Establish systems for rewarding 'opportunity spotting' at all levels
- Increase the UCT Foundation Endowment through the "Distinguishing UCT" campaign
- Work with other universities to advise and lobby government and business on higher education funding and fee systems
- Review UCT's investment policy regarding its endowments, with a focus on the environmental and social impact of our investments

#### **Physical and technological infrastructure**

- Increase residence capacity in line with the targets in the Integrated Planning Framework and develop funding strategies to support this – including private funding, donors and cost recovery
- Develop an advanced high-performance computing infrastructure as well as high-end ICT tools, to enable the storage and analysis of big data and eResearch
- Maximise the use of ICT tools to make UCT's research output and educational resources available as widely as possible

- Strengthen the University's capacity to support online delivery of courses, programmes and library content, and the use of technology-enhanced teaching and learning
- Achieve the goal of every student having their own laptop (requires funding for financial aid students) with implications for learning spaces, computer labs, infrastructure support, and pedagogy
- Expand conference centre capacity as a net revenue source
- If funding available from DHET, build a further academic building on Middle Campus
- Build home for School of Development Policy and Practice (donor funding dependant)
- Constant review and upgrade of security systems

#### **Administrative systems and capability**

- Review the efficiency of administrative systems and, specifically, automate human resource and procurement systems
- Implement Converis, an advanced electronic research administration system in conjunction with the newly restructured research support services (from grant-writing, to application, ethics, monitoring and reporting support)
- Move almost all undergraduate and postgraduate student application, registration, curriculum eligibility, housing, financial aid, payment, graduation, processes online
- Strengthen the use of data analytics capacity to inform planning and effect efficiencies.

#### **Transformational leadership and development of staff**

- Develop a succession plan for university leaders
- Develop a plan to attract and retain highly qualified and talented professional staff
- Develop leadership capabilities of current line managers and staff to promote innovation, steer changes in culture, and manage and improve staff relationships within their units
- Hold leaders, including academic Heads of Department, accountable for achieving transformation objectives
- Develop effective systems for the evaluation of performance and potential, and frameworks for career-pathing and succession management, including provisions for research and development leave and educational opportunities for PASS staff