



Norman Arendse - Chair of Council  
University of Cape Town, Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa  
Bremner Building, Lovers' Walk, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 7700, South Africa

23 December 2023

To the 37 anonymous complainants mentioned in the Ombud Report of 2019

### **UCT apologises for failing to address past bullying complaints**

The University of Cape Town (UCT) Council offers an unreserved apology for failing to address your complaints of bullying, as detailed in the Ombud Report of 2019, covering the reporting period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019.

We recognise that had the Council at the time fulfilled its governance role as required and taken appropriate action, the events that unfolded and emotional trauma to many individuals, including yourselves, could have been avoided. We regret not acting sooner. We acknowledge that our actions failed to uphold UCT's policies and values around discrimination, violence, bullying, and harassment. We are committed to implementing measures to ensure such lapses are not repeated. We are committed to creating, promoting, and maintaining a safe, welcoming and inclusive working, learning and research environment that is free from any form of harassment and bullying, that respects the integrity, dignity and privacy of all employees and students.

We have taken steps to rectify the situation and provide support to those affected. A counseling service is available for any complainant who experienced bullying during the specified reporting period. If you believe you have been a victim of bullying and would like to make use of this service, please do not hesitate to contact Independent Counselling and Advisory Services (ICAS), who have arranged for a Senior Counsellor to support those complainants who so wish. The ICAS number is 082 448 0265; see also <https://hr.uct.ac.za/remuneration-benefits-organisational-health-employee-assistance-occupational-health/counselling>

Your well-being and that of the entire UCT community remains our top priority.

Sincerely,

Norman Arendse (SC)  
Chair of Council



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University of Cape Town, Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa  
Bremner Building, Lovers' Walk, Rondebosch, Cape Town, 7700, South Africa

23 December 2023

Russell Ally  
By email -

Dear Dr Ally

I write this on behalf of the University of Cape Town (UCT) Council and as an outcome of the Report of the Independent Panel investigation into governance shortcomings at UCT during the period 2018-2022. The final report, in making its findings, drew on the evidence you had presented, and we wish to thank you for your contribution in this regard.

The circumstances that gave rise to your resignation from the institution as the Executive Director of the Development and Alumni Department during that time were clearly the cause of much distress to you and your family. The UCT Council offers an unreserved apology for this.

We wish to commend you for your meritorious service to UCT, especially in your dealing with the governance and leadership challenges that faced the university during your tenure. We thank you for acting with courage and integrity in upholding the best interests of the university under trying circumstances, consistent with the university's values of fairness and honesty. We recognize that following this path came at a high price to you. We recognize that had the Council at the time fulfilled its governance role as required, the events that unfolded and emotional trauma to you and other executive staff who resigned or took early retirement could have been avoided. We regret not acting sooner and we apologize unreservedly.

Your principled actions should serve as a positive example for the UCT community. We are intent on putting in place measures to prevent the recurrence of similar circumstances in the future.

We are in the process of taking remedial action and course correcting to restore the university community and the public's trust and confidence in us as a leading institution of higher learning. In doing so, we are committed to creating, promoting, and maintaining a safe, welcoming and inclusive working, learning and research environment that is free from any form of harassment and bullying that respects the integrity, dignity and privacy of all employees and students.

Kind regards,

Norman Arendse (SC)  
Chair of Council



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23 December 2023

Debbie Budlender  
By email -

Dear Ms Budlender

I write this on behalf of the University of Cape Town (UCT) Council and as an outcome of the Report of the Independent Panel investigation into governance shortcomings at UCT during the period 2018-2022. The final report, in making its findings, drew on the evidence you had presented, and we wish to thank you for your contribution in this regard.

As such, the UCT Council would like to publicly honour and recognise your meritorious service to UCT during your time in office as Deputy Chairperson of Council until March 2020, especially with regards to your actions in addressing aspects of the poor leadership at the time at the institution. In an effort to uphold the UCT values of fairness, honesty and accountability, you raised important issues, acting with conviction, integrity and without fear. We acknowledge that these were not adequately addressed at the time and recognize that following this path came at a high price to you. We regret the circumstances that led to your resignation.

Your principled actions should serve as a positive example for the UCT community; we are intent on taking every possible measure to prevent the recurrence of similar circumstances in the future. As such, we are committed to creating, promoting and maintaining a safe, welcoming and inclusive working, learning and research environment that is free from any form of harassment and bullying that respects the integrity, dignity and privacy of all employees and students.

Kind regards,

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23 December 2023

Judith du Toit  
By email -

Dear Ms du Toit

I write this on behalf of the University of Cape Town (UCT) Council and as an outcome of the Report of the Independent Panel investigation into governance shortcomings at UCT during the period 2018-2022. The final report, in making its findings, drew on the evidence you had presented, and we wish to thank you for your contribution in this regard.

The circumstances that gave rise to your resignation from the institution as Director in the Office of the VC during that time were clearly the cause of much distress to you and your family. The UCT Council offers an unreserved apology for this. We wish to commend you for your meritorious service to UCT, especially in your dealing with the governance and leadership challenges that faced the university during your tenure. We thank you for acting with courage and integrity in upholding the best interests of the university under trying circumstances, consistent with the university's values of fairness and honesty. We recognize that following this path came at a high price to you.

We recognize that had the Council at the time fulfilled its governance role as required, the events that unfolded and emotional trauma to you and other executive staff who resigned or took early retirement could have been avoided. We regret not acting sooner and we apologize unreservedly.

Your principled actions should serve as a positive example for the UCT community. We are intent on putting in place measures to prevent the recurrence of similar circumstances in the future.

We are in the process of taking remedial action and course correcting to restore the university community and the public's trust and confidence in us as a leading institution of higher learning. In doing so, we are committed to creating, promoting, and maintaining a safe, welcoming and inclusive working, learning and research environment that is free from any form of harassment and bullying that respects the integrity, dignity and privacy of all employees and students.

Kind regards,

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23 December 2023

Loretta Feris  
By email -

Dear Professor Feris

I write this on behalf of the University of Cape Town (UCT) Council and as an outcome of the Report of the Independent Panel investigation into governance shortcomings at UCT during the period 2018-2022. The final report, in making its findings, drew on the evidence you had presented, and we wish to thank you for your contribution in this regard.

The circumstances that gave rise to your resignation from the institution as DVC for Transformation and Student Affairs during that time were clearly the cause of much distress to you and your family. The UCT Council offers an unreserved apology for this. We commend you for your meritorious service to UCT and in your dealing with the governance and leadership challenges that faced the university during your tenure. In addition, we place immense value on the contribution you made in establishing a firm foundation upon which UCT's transformation initiatives are built.

We thank you for acting with courage and integrity in upholding the best interests of the university under trying circumstances, consistent with the university's values of fairness and honesty. We acknowledge that following this path came at a high price to you. We recognize that had the Council at the time fulfilled its governance role as required, the events that unfolded and emotional trauma to you and other executive staff who resigned or took early retirement could have been avoided. We regret not acting sooner and we apologize unreservedly. Your principled actions should serve as a positive example for the UCT community. We are intent on putting in place measures to prevent the recurrence of similar circumstances in the future.

We are in the process of taking remedial action and course correcting to restore the university community and the public's trust and confidence in us as a leading institution of higher learning. In doing so, we are committed to creating, promoting, and maintaining a safe, welcoming and inclusive working, learning and research environment that is free from any form of harassment and bullying that respects the integrity, dignity and privacy of all employees and students.

Kind regards,

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23 December 2023

Miriam Hoosain  
By email -

Dear Ms Hoosain

I write this on behalf of the University of Cape Town (UCT) Council and as an outcome of the Report of the Independent Panel investigation into governance shortcomings at UCT during the period 2018-2022. The final report, in making its findings, drew on the evidence you presented, and we wish to thank you for your contribution in this regard.

The circumstances that gave rise to your resignation from the institution as Executive Director of Human Resources during that time were clearly the cause of much distress to you and your family. The UCT Council offers an unreserved apology for this. We wish to commend you for your meritorious service to UCT, especially in your dealing with the governance and leadership challenges that faced the university during your tenure.

We thank you for acting with courage and integrity in upholding the best interests of the university under trying circumstances, consistent with the university's values of fairness and honesty. We recognize that following this path came at a high price to you. We recognize that had the Council at the time fulfilled its governance role as required, the events that unfolded and emotional trauma to you and other executive staff who resigned or took early retirement could have been avoided. We regret not acting sooner and we apologize unreservedly. Your principled actions should serve as a positive example for the UCT community. We are intent on putting in place measures to prevent the recurrence of similar circumstances in the future.

We are in the process of taking remedial action and course correcting to restore the university community and the public's trust and confidence in us as a leading institution of higher learning. In doing so, we are committed to creating, promoting, and maintaining a safe, welcoming, and inclusive working, learning and research environment that is free from any form of harassment and bullying that respects the integrity, dignity and privacy of all employees and students.

Kind regards,

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23 December 2023

Gerda Kruger  
By email -

Dear Ms Kruger

I write this on behalf of the University of Cape Town (UCT) Council and as an outcome of the Report of the Independent Panel investigation into governance shortcomings at UCT during the period 2018-2022. The final report, in making its findings, drew on the evidence you had presented, and we wish to thank you for your contribution in this regard.

The circumstances that gave rise to your suspension from the institution as Executive Director of Communication and Marketing in May 2022, as well as the publication of defamatory statements involving your name that appeared in the media at the time were clearly the cause of much distress to you and your family. The UCT Council offers an unreserved apology for this. We commend you for your meritorious service to UCT, especially in dealing with the governance and leadership challenges that faced the university during your tenure. We thank you for acting with courage and integrity in upholding the best interests of the university under trying circumstances, consistent with the university's values of fairness and honesty. We recognize that following this path came at a high price.

We also recognize that had the Council at the time fulfilled its governance role as required, the events that unfolded and emotional trauma to you and many individuals could have been avoided. We regret not acting sooner and we apologize unreservedly. Your principled actions should serve as a positive example for the UCT community; we are intent on taking every possible measure to prevent the recurrence of similar circumstances in the future.

We are in the process of taking remedial action and course correcting in order to restore the university community and the public's trust and confidence in us as a leading institution of higher learning. There is much to do but we are determined to get it right. We are committed to creating, promoting, and maintaining a safe, welcoming and inclusive working, learning and research environment that is free from any form of harassment and bullying that respects the integrity, dignity and privacy of all employees and students.

Kind regards,

Norman Arendse (SC)  
Chair of Council



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23 December 2023

Lis Lange  
By email -

Dear A/Professor Lange

I write this on behalf of the University of Cape Town (UCT) Council and as an outcome of the Report of the Independent Panel investigation into governance shortcomings at UCT during the period 2018-2022. The final report, in making its findings, drew on the evidence you had presented, and we wish to thank you for your contribution in this regard.

The circumstances that gave rise to your departure from the institution as an academic and as DVC Teaching and Learning during that time were clearly the cause of much distress to you and your family. The UCT Council offers an unreserved apology for this, including the publishing of defamatory statements involving your name, which appeared in the media at the time. We would also like to commend you for your meritorious service to UCT, especially in dealing with the governance and leadership challenges that faced the university during your tenure.

We thank you for acting with courage and integrity in upholding the best interests of the university under trying circumstances, consistent with the values of fairness and honesty. We recognize that following this path came at a high price. We also recognize that had the Council at the time fulfilled its governance role as required, the events that unfolded and emotional trauma to you and many individuals could have been avoided. We regret not acting sooner and we apologize unreservedly.

Your principled actions should serve as a positive example for the UCT community; we are intent on taking every possible measure to prevent the recurrence of similar circumstances in the future.

We are in the process of taking remedial action and course correcting in order to restore the university community and the public's trust and confidence in us as a leading institution of higher learning. There is much to do but we are determined to get it right. We are committed to creating, promoting, and maintaining a safe, welcoming, and inclusive working, learning and research environment that is free from any form of harassment and bullying that respects the integrity, dignity and privacy of all employees and students.

Kind regards,

Norman Arendse (SC)  
Chair of Council





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23 December 2023  
Zetu Makamandela-Mguqulwa  
By email -

Dear Ms Makamandela-Mguqulwa

I write this on behalf of the University of Cape Town (UCT) Council and as an outcome of the Report of the Independent Panel investigation into governance shortcomings at UCT during the period 2018-2022. The final report, in making its findings, drew on the evidence you had presented, and we wish to thank you for your contribution in this regard.

The UCT Council would like to honour and recognise your meritorious service to UCT during your time in office, especially with regards to your actions around the release of the Ombud Report 2019, covering the reporting period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019.

You challenged the highest levels of the administration to foster fair and just practices. The report that you authored was instrumental in setting in motion a chain of events that would eventually put UCT on a better path marked by recognising past mistakes, and course correcting.

As such, it would be remiss to not acknowledge the past mistake of Council. We regret the decision that was taken by the UCT Council at the time to not to act on your report. This was a mistake that undermined the independent responsibility of the Ombud and compromised your ability to continue doing your work in good faith. We recognise that we failed to address and take seriously the complaints of bullying brought forward by your office, as detailed in your Ombud Report of 2019. For this, we unreservedly apologise.

We are committed to creating, promoting, and maintaining a safe, welcoming, and inclusive working, learning and research environment that is free from any form of harassment and bullying that respects the integrity, dignity and privacy of all employees and students. We have taken steps to rectify the situation and provide support to those affected by incidents of bullying, in the form of a free counselling service.

We thank you for acting with courage and integrity in upholding the best interests of the university under trying circumstances, subscribing to the principles of fairness and honesty. We recognise that following this path came at a high price to you.

Kind regards,

Norman Arendse (SC)  
Chair of Council



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23 December 2023

Reno Morar  
By email -

Dear Dr Morar

I write this on behalf of the University of Cape Town (UCT) Council and as an outcome of the Report of the Independent Panel investigation into governance shortcomings at UCT during the period 2018-2022. The final report, in making its findings, drew on the evidence you had presented, and we wish to thank you for your contribution in this regard.

The circumstances that gave rise to your resignation from the institution as Chief Operating Officer and as a member of Council during that time were clearly the cause of much distress to you and your family. The UCT Council offers an unreserved apology for this.

We wish to commend you for your meritorious service to UCT, especially in your dealing with the governance and leadership challenges that faced the university during your tenure. We note your valuable and clear-headed contributions at Council meetings when difficult challenges often had to be navigated. We thank you for acting with courage and integrity in upholding the best interests of the university under trying circumstances, consistent with the university's values of fairness and honesty. We recognise that following this path came at a high price to you.

We recognize that had the Council at the time fulfilled its governance role as required, the events that unfolded and emotional trauma to you and other executive staff who resigned or took early retirement could have been avoided. We regret not acting sooner and we apologize unreservedly. Your principled actions should serve as a positive example for the UCT community. We are intent on putting in place measures to prevent the recurrence of similar circumstances in the future.

We are in the process of taking remedial action and course correcting to restore the university community and the public's trust and confidence in us as a leading institution of higher learning. In doing so, we are committed to creating, promoting, and maintaining a safe, welcoming and inclusive working, learning and research environment that is free from any form of harassment and bullying that respects the integrity, dignity and privacy of all employees and students.

Kind regards,

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23 December 2023

Royston Pillay  
By email -

Dear Mr Pillay

I write this on behalf of the University of Cape Town (UCT) Council and as an outcome of the Report of the Independent Panel investigation into governance shortcomings at UCT during the period 2018-2022. The final report, in making its findings, drew on the evidence you presented, and we wish to thank you for your contribution in this regard.

The circumstances that gave rise to your resignation from the institution as Registrar during that time were clearly the cause of much distress to you and your family. The UCT Council offers an unreserved apology for this. We wish to commend you for your meritorious service to UCT, especially in your dealing with the governance and leadership challenges that faced the university during your tenure. In particular we express our gratitude to you for accepting our appeal to reconsider your resignation and to continue to serve the institution as Registrar. The role of the Registrar is a crucial role for the institution, both during the governance crisis that unfolded and the current transition period where we are intent on setting things right.

We thank you for acting with courage and integrity in upholding the best interests of the university under trying circumstances, consistent with the university's values of fairness and honesty. We recognize that following this path came at a high price to you. We recognize that had the Council at the time fulfilled its governance role as required, the events that unfolded and emotional trauma to you and other executive staff who resigned or took early retirement could have been avoided. We regret not acting sooner and we apologize unreservedly. Your principled actions should serve as a positive example for the UCT community. We are intent on putting in place measures to prevent the recurrence of similar circumstances in the future.

We are in the process of taking remedial action and course correcting to restore the university community and the public's trust and confidence in us as a leading institution of higher learning. In doing so, we are committed to creating, promoting, and maintaining a safe, welcoming, and inclusive working, learning and research environment that is free from any form of harassment and bullying that respects the integrity, dignity and privacy of all employees and students.

Kind regards,

Norman Arendse (SC)  
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23 December 2023

Linda Ronnie  
By email -

Dear Professor Ronnie

I write this on behalf of the University of Cape Town (UCT) Council and as an outcome of the Report of the Independent Panel investigation into governance shortcomings at UCT during the period 2018-2022. The final report, in making its findings, drew on the evidence you had presented, and we wish to thank you for your contribution in this regard.

The circumstances that gave rise to your resignation from the institution as Dean of the Commerce Faculty during that time were clearly the cause of much distress to you and your family. The UCT Council offers an unreserved apology for this. We wish to commend you for your meritorious service to UCT, especially in your dealing with the governance and leadership challenges that faced the university during your tenure. We thank you for acting with courage and integrity in upholding the best interests of the university under trying circumstances, consistent with the university's values of fairness and honesty. We recognize that following this path came at a high price to you.

We recognize that had the Council at the time fulfilled its governance role as required, the events that unfolded and emotional trauma to you and other executive staff who resigned or took early retirement could have been avoided. We regret not acting sooner and we apologize unreservedly. Your principled actions should serve as a positive example for the UCT community. We are intent on putting in place measures to prevent the recurrence of similar circumstances in the future.

We are in the process of taking remedial action and course correcting to restore the university community and the public's trust and confidence in us as a leading institution of higher learning. In doing so, we are committed to creating, promoting, and maintaining a safe, welcoming and inclusive working, learning and research environment that is free from any form of harassment and bullying that respects the integrity, dignity and privacy of all employees and students.

Kind regards,

Norman Arendse (SC)  
Chair of Council