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## **UCT Careers Service rapidly adapting to global work revolution due to COVID-19 pandemic**

A lot has changed in the past three months. In January 2020 the University of Cape Town (UCT) Careers Service was gearing up to continue its hard work to prepare graduates for a world that will impose increasingly greater complexity on them and require them to be ever more agile. This work included preparing graduates to gear up for a world of work that would undoubtedly challenge their traditional understanding of the world of work, particularly in light of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

Then, in the blink of an eye, the Careers Service team went from a deep focus on students' readiness for the anticipated world of work, to recognising the need to rapidly adapt to an enforced global world of work revolution linked to the global pandemic.

Head of Employer Relations at UCT's Career Service, Nawaal Boolay, said: "Life has put us all in a pivot boot camp, testing the agility of our graduates, our institution and our industry partners alike. The exponential complexities introduced by the pandemic to the lives of private individuals and industry has been covered widely in recent weeks – it is unprecedented, and no one will escape its impact."

Despite the magnitude of global disruption, prior human needs will not simply cease to exist. In fact, the Careers Service believes that these will evolve and that changing needs and greater consumer caution will drive a proliferation of innovations across the value chain in all industries.

In this new, mercurial world, industry will no doubt respond to meet the new and sometimes unexpected demands that have rapidly been thrust upon them. Re-imagining the ways to continue creating value for their customers and stakeholders will benefit from access to exceptional talent.

“At UCT we are optimistic about the industry opportunities ahead and we are committed and ready to contribute our share of hungry, talented professionals to meet the demands of a new world,” Boolay added.

“Based on our experiences and backed up by our engagement data for the past two months, our industry partners share our optimism for the future despite the disruptions. This is confirmed in particular, by the fact that many industry partners have confirmed their intention to continue with UCT graduate recruitment.”

Boolay said while they acknowledge the new recruitment and on-boarding challenges facing employers, they were actively engaging with stakeholder communities to work through the anticipated challenges and to re-imagine the entire recruitment and onboarding process.

In an uncertain future, these are not insignificant challenges, but the Careers Service is unmoved in their commitment to students and industry partners to ensure that the demands ahead are met and to contribute effectively to the rebuilding of the economy and society.

According to Boolay, graduates must keep researching their industry, keep looking for opportunities and most importantly: keep applying. “And remember that there is nothing wrong with changing career direction in the short term. Explore your options, considering how your skills and experiences could translate into opportunities you might not have considered in the past.”

“However, this pandemic and its influence on our lives may end, I want our graduates to know that there will be light at the end of the tunnel. Maybe not the light you expected, but a light that will offer new and unexpected opportunities. Sometimes in what appears to be the bleakest times, the greatest opportunities are waiting to reward your willingness to remain agile – and to hold onto hope,” said Boolay.

***ENDS***

***Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department***

**Nombuso Shabalala**

Head: Media Liaison

Communication and Marketing Department

University of Cape Town

Rondebosch

Tel: (021) 650 4190

Cell: (076) 473 5882

Email: [nombuso.shabalala@uct.ac.za](mailto:nombuso.shabalala@uct.ac.za)

Website: [www.uct.ac.za](http://www.uct.ac.za)