



CHAIR'S CIRCULAR
FREE EDUCATION PLANNING GROUP

Date: 13 December 2018

Dear all members of the FEPG and AAC

FEPG: Update on the Research and Engagement strategy

Following the last FEPG meeting, an in-depth series of meetings ensued with students and staff to find a strategy that will best achieve the objective of producing an increased amount of quality research. The most optimal fit for a student-centred research project was deemed to be that of awarding several research scholarships to students across all faculties. Further consultation is underway to finalise the proposal (see draft call attached). This approach achieves several objectives such as to:

- *Promote high quality scholarship* through research and engagement to address contemporary debates in higher education around the question of Free Education.
- *To promote social justice* through intellectually enriching contributions to the growing body of knowledge on access to and retention of disadvantaged students in higher education within the context of societal inequities.
- *Student centeredness*: Students participated in the design of the grants, and the selection committee for the awards will also include students.
- *Inclusivity*: In keeping with the principle of student-centeredness, this initiative is open to students registered for Honours, Masters and PhD degrees at UCT in 2019.
- *Open to a diversity of disciplines and methods*: The aim is to initiate research on the topic of Free Education that draws from a diverse range of perspectives, disciplines and research methods. To this end, applicants are invited to submit proposals that draw on orthodox and/or heterodox approaches to research.
- *Engagement oriented*: Opportunities will be created for those receiving awards to present the different stages of their work to foster engagement and public debate.
- *Promoting relevance*: Furthermore, consideration as to how research could be applied (for example to develop policy briefs) will be an integral component of the research project.

We invite the participation of the FEPG and AAC members, like before, to avail themselves to provide expert support. The following key areas have been identified:

- becoming an academic supervisor in your area of interest where students require support,
- serving as a member of the scholarships committee,
- assisting with preparing research for publication or
- assisting with workshop facilitation

Please email: charmaine.january@uct.ac.za by the 15 January 2019, should you be interested to participate.

We are excited about the possibilities that are embedded in the expanded vision for the project. We believe that the re-focussed all-inclusive, broad based strategy will produce high quality research outputs in 2019.

We look forward to a year of significant achievements.



A/ Prof Goolam Modack

Academic Co-Chair: Free Education Planning Group