

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



THE CONVOCATION

Minutes of the meeting Annual General Meeting of Convocation held in Kramer Law Building LT1 on Thursday 15 December 2016

Present

The President of Convocation (Professor Dr NB Pityana), The Vice-Chancellor (Dr MR Price, the Secretary of Convocation (RN Pillay) and members who signed the roll, and whose names are recorded in the minute book.

Apologies

Members whose names are recorded in the minute book.

1. Welcome and preliminary matters

The President of Convocation, Professor Pityana, welcomed all present. He reminded the meeting that (i) the Convocation may discuss and state its opinion upon any matter relating to the University, including any matter referred to it by the Council, the Senate or the Institutional Forum; and (ii) the Convocation was composed of the graduates and all holders of diplomas and certificates of the University, the vice-chancellor, deputy-vice-chancellors and the academic staff and those former professors and associate professors who had been elected to the rank of emeritus professor and emeritus associate professor.

The President noted that 3 motions had been received by the deadline on 1 December 2016 and that two additional motions had been received after the deadline. In respect of the latter, the movers had been informed that the motions could be considered under “any other business” with the agreement of the two thirds majority of the members of Convocation present.

A member of the Convocation, Neville Rubin, contended that the meeting was not properly constituted as the notification of the meeting fell short of the 10-week notification period as required in terms of S 41(3) of the Statute. A member of the Academic staff, who did not identify himself by name noted that he had not received a notification of the meeting in his capacity as a member of the academic staff. He asked whether members of the academic staff had been notified of the meeting.

The Secretary replied. He conceded, with apology, that the time frames as stipulated by the statute had not been observed and that the notice was given 8 weeks prior the meeting as opposed to the 10 weeks required by the Statute. He noted further that he was of the understanding that academic staff had been notified of the meeting and that every effort had been made to publicise the meeting (via the UCT website, twitter, linked-in etc.)

The President proposed that the meeting condone the late notification of the meeting for the reasons stated, which the members present approved with an overwhelming majority.

At this point a group of protestors entered the venue and demanded to address the house. The meeting could not proceed with the set agenda as a consequence. The authority of the Chair was not given due regard as individual protestors and individual members of Convocation shouted their points of view at each other. The Chair appealed for calm and order, often to no avail. The President proposed that the students be allowed to conduct a silent protest. Dr Lydia Cairncross, an alumnus and member of the academic staff, made the point that the Convocation should acknowledge that the meeting was being held under exceptional circumstances and suggested that the student protestors be allowed to remain present in a silent protest. The Chair indicated that he would be willing to permit such an arrangement. Mr Geoff Budlender SC proposed that the meeting endorse the Chair's decision that the meeting proceed and that the silent protest continue. The meeting proceeded on this basis.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2015, which had been published on the UCT website and were tabled, were put and adopted.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

The Secretary reminded the meeting that the Naming of Buildings Committee had referred the request for a change of the name of the JP Duminy Residence to the Council Task Team that was established by the Council to review all names of buildings, rooms and spaces in the wake of the #RhodesMust Fall protests in 2015. He reported that this Task Team was yet to complete its work and that Council had therefore not yet reached a resolution regarding the proposed name change.

Regarding the 2015 request of the Convocation that a policy on the use of private security and the police in response to protests on campus be devised, the Secretary informed the meeting that Council had approved a policy on the use of South African Police Services on campus. The policy contained some references to the use of private security.

The meeting noted that the matter of the disestablishment of a post of editor of an energy journal published under UCT's auspices and the retrenchment of the incumbent had been settled by the Council for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA).

4. Report of the President of Convocation

Professor Pityana presented his report as President of Convocation and announced that he had, after wide consultation, nominated Mr Hugh Amoore, former Registrar of the University, as the 2016 recipient of the President of Convocation Medal.

The report is appended to these minutes as Appendix I.

5. Report of the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor, Dr Max Price, presented his report.

The report is appended to these minutes as Appendix II.

6. Motions

Ballot on a vote of no-confidence in The Vice-Chancellor and his senior Executive

Emeritus Professor Timothy Crowe, Seconded by Dr Anna Crowe moved that the UCT Convocation be balloted (anonymously and, if willing, by fine-scale “self-identification” – by “race”, gender, age etc.) to consider a vote of no-confidence in the Vice-Chancellor and his senior Executive acting as representatives of the interests of the UCT community as a whole in negotiations with UCT students, staff and others who have been adjudged to have broken the law under the pretext of legitimate protest.

In his motivation, Emeritus Professor Crowe had argued that lawless actions should be dealt with by fair, speedy and unfettered adjudication according to long-established procedures within UCT and, where relevant, according to South African law, without any further intervention by the Vice-Chancellor et al. Failing that, he feared that UCT would suffer in terms of:

1. Migration of outstanding matriculants to other centres of tertiary education;
2. Departure of many of UCT’s best and brightest academics;
3. Loss of donations/bequest from all traditional sources; and
4. Further erosion of academic freedom as UCT’s *raison d’être*

Emeritus Professor Crowe told the meeting that the purpose of his motion was focused, his differences of opinion and concern for the university was covered elsewhere. His major concern was that none of the achievements highlighted by the Vice-Chancellor in his address to Convocation would be possible should the events of the past 18 months continue along the same trajectory. The major point he wished those present to consider was the negotiations with people who were at best alleged law breakers.

Dr Anna Crowe noted for the record that she had been in contact with a number of students across diverse range who had all indicated that they wanted to get a quality education from UCT, that they were feeling marginalised.

The motion was debated amid interjections and insistence by persons not recognised by the Chair to speak to be allowed to do so. The authority of the Chair was often challenged in what was a very difficult meeting to run.

Mr Geoff Budlender SC spoke against the motion. He argued that Professor Crowe's motion was unreasonable and explained that because one might disagree with the decisions taken by the Executive in very difficult circumstances, it did not warrant a motion of no-confidence. He saluted the determination, energy and courage shown by the Vice-Chancellor and the Executive. He cautioned against negotiating with elective representatives only and ignoring the marginalised. He said that the starting point was to speak and listen to everybody.

A person who wished to speak anonymously spoke against the motion. She argued that the motion had no basis as it was based on white fears.

A member of the academic staff spoke in favour of the motion. She spoke about the failure of the Executive to consult staff (academic and PASS) and all students during negotiations with the protesters and the inability to create a safe environment for students and staff. She argued that the lack of consultation with the staff showed contempt.

At this point, the meeting became even more charged when the owner of a campus food outlet and his staff started their own protest in the meeting, holding up posters with threats allegedly made to them by Fees Must Fall protesters. Student protestors reacted to what they saw as racist poster statements directed at them. There were calls to eject the owner of the food outlet from the meeting. After a period of on-going tension, the food vendor left the venue.

Ms Gwen Ngwenya spoke in favour of the motion. She said that her lack of confidence was in the agreement reached with the protesters on the eve of exams, rather than in the individual members of the Executive. She noted that in law a motion of no-confidence did not have to resolve in a resignation or termination of office. She said that there was an opportunity for the Vice-Chancellor and the Executive to restore confidence by rendering the agreement null and void. She argued that one of the prizes of the agreement was non-violence but that one can't negotiate for non-violence as it is a constitutional given and therefore non-negotiable.

Dr Lydia Cairncross spoke against the motion of no confidence. She noted that the motion intended to reject the agreement that was reached and argued that the reconciliation commission agreed to in terms of the agreement was in the university's best interests and would possibly allow the university to open in 2017 without protest. She commended the current generation of students for bringing issues of transformation and racism to the table. She acknowledged that the agreement reached had its flaws, but pleaded that the agreement should serve as a starting point moving forward.

Mr Gaontebale Nodoba agreed that there should be a motion of no-confidence, but argued that the basis of the motion was flawed and moved for an amendment to the motion. He accused the UCT Executive of not supporting transformation and the student demands until they were forced to; carrying out indecisive, visionless fixes and inconsistently applying institutional rules.

Professor Corder then proposed a motion of closure of the debate which was put and adopted with 102 members voting in favour and 15 against.

The meeting once again became extremely disorderly, and the authority of the chairperson was not recognised by a number of individuals present. There were constant shouts of objections to process, and orderly debate was not possible.

At this point, as it was no longer possible to have a regular and orderly meeting, the Chair adjourned the meeting without voting on the motion or amendments.

Royston Pillay
Secretary of Convocation
3 January 2017

PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN CONVOCATION

Mr Vice Chancellor;

Registrar and Secretary of Convocation;

The Executive Management of the university;

Chairperson of the Board of the UCT Alumni and Development Association; Members of the Board;

Members of UCT Convocation:

It has been an honour to serve the UCT Community and the university in the capacity of President of the UCT Convocation for the past two years. As it happens, this period was perhaps the most tumultuous in the history of this august institution. 2015 began rather inauspiciously with the #RhodesMustFall protests, later developed into #FeesMustFall and all the related causes of protests. As I have often said, this has been an experience will forever remain etched in the collective memory of this generation of UCT students. It may well be that it is an experience life-changing, intellectually challenging, and it shapes the life of both staff and students.

I can only imagine that for those whose daily lives are tied up with the university, both staff and students, academic and non-academic and their families and loved ones, it has been a traumatic experience. The visuals of students burning irreplaceable works of art that are as much part of the memory archive of this university, or to have sight of the Jamie Shuttle on fire, or to behold all the efforts, negotiations that have been conducted, or the campus under security and police guard, or UCT students under arrest or in police custody, or appearing in court on criminal charges – all of this is enough to have one’s heart sink. The visuals of a student aiming a physical assault on the Vice Chancellor following his presentation on behalf of the university to the Heher Commission is a wholly unacceptable and intolerable extent of student protest.

And yet, we know that in the midst of the tumult and chaos UCT remains an institution devoted to academic pursuits. Academics in particular have sought to teach and guide students in the most difficult circumstances. Researchers continued to be engaged in their endeavours, especially research students continued with their research projects. At times the administration of the university was put under tremendous stress, but the devotion and diligence of the Vice Chancellor and the executive team, of the Registrar and the administration staff, of the finance management teams, and

of Council, must be acknowledged. Even more, it must be noted that UCT academic staff and students have been engaged in vibrant debate about the character, merits, and in a critical debates on the strategies adopted by those students who were active in the protest movement.

Many of us fall into the trap of homogenizing events of this nature. We are responsive to the “noise” that some especially the protesters are capable of. We respond to the latest challenge and pressure, we concede ground where we need not have done. More dangerously we ignore the pleas of the less vocal students who experience protest as intolerance, whose views are never sought, who are shut down, and who are unable to air their alternative narrative. We listen less to them, even more we may even be in danger of creating out of them too a culture of conformism, going with the crowd without thought, or who live in fear and are traumatised. Their politics may not be in conformity with the political idiom in fashion on campus at the time, but they are just as valid. Their story may well be a story about a future they could see shattered right in front of their eyes, and who are without the options others might have, and who may be anxious about their parents, family and siblings. They too need our care and support at a time like this. We must guard against the danger of creating out of our university campuses a theatre of intolerance of diverse ideas and contesting viewpoints. The possibilities for continuous learning, for being inquisitive, curious and challenging inside and outside the classroom; of being assertive about one’s chosen course of action, is an option that lends itself to a learning environment. It is quintessentially the culture of the university.

The university is more than an initiation school for right thinking, for critical thought. It is also a home for character formation at a stage in one’s life. It is about being decent, loving, caring, civility – about being a man or a woman. It is to learn the art of being human.

Our interest, as Convocation, however, is not about governing or managing the university. Our preoccupation and sense of pride is to support the university as we seek ways and means whereby we could plough back to the institution – our experience, expertise, resources, that which we also received from the university. Part of what we received, and that has in the meantime marked our intellectual maturity is the capacity we have to leverage goodwill for the university. The continuing prestige and eminence of this university continuously enhances the value of our certificates and qualifications. When the university slumps there is the danger that such a circumstance will de-value our qualifications. We cannot be indifferent to what is happening at our *alma mater*.

There is another reason that we must remain engaged on matters affecting our university. I mention only two. First, the Vice Chancellor of Wits University, Prof Adam Habib, in a recent article

published in *Daily Maverick* reflected on two phenomena that marked the student protests. One, was the role of academics, especially those who considered themselves to be sympathetic to the cause of the students. They go by various names either a progressive or Left-leaning scholars. They have a very important role of guiding, correcting, standing with, educating students whose activism is a form of social experimentation. He states that some of these have been preoccupied with obstructing the efforts, unpleasant they might be, of the university management in a difficult environment. In the process they have also failed to critically guide the student activities into an intelligent engagement with the issues that confront them. The result has been that students have been unable to engage critically, or to be self-critical when they needed to be. It also meant that students were blind to available options for advancing their cause, or to recognize the allies they have in the Management about the substantive issues the struggle is about. It creates the danger that in life there will be a generation of intellectuals (presumably) who believe that all one has to do in life is just to demand and it happens according to one's dictat. Life is never like that. What arises from that for me is a concern about the caliber of graduates universities are producing, or are likely to produce. What is the character of the professionals and intelligentsia that universities produce in terms of strategy, problem-solving and social skills like listening, processing argument, and articulating ideas.

Two, he decried the "absence" of parents and family in the entire debacle. His interactions with parents, many of whom were themselves first generation graduates in their homes, or even former students of Wits, he sensed an ambivalence and a duplicity that was worrying. I do not think that his use of the word "duplicity" was meant to be morally reprehensible in the negative sense. They were clearly caught between the parental urge to support their children, and the feeling that it was a responsible thing to do to keep the university going for the sake of the children. Of course, we must recognize that we are not talking about "children" here. This applied not just to the immediate family, but also to political leaders, church and other sectors that influence and shape social mores. In other words, there is a sense that students (and universities) are left on their own. There is no guiding hand at home, in the community, or at university.

The second, and bigger issue that I believe we should flag is whether we, South Africans, have thought deeply about the nature and purpose of a university. I shall be brief. There is a sense that students are forcing us to think more clearly and more deeply about what exactly do we mean by the university. In other words, is the university as we have it likely to advance the kind of society envisaged in our constitution, or does it truly reflect our ideas of a free, fair, just and egalitarian society?

As we know we had the Commission on Higher Education that reported in 1995, and on the basis of which the Higher Education Act, 1997 was designed. The reality, we must know, is that as much of the vision for the university at that time was an instrument for dismantle of the apartheid design in higher education – its societal organization, architecture and design, and its though nature were intrinsically never dismantled. That is the reason that the higher education landscape in our country to this day remains unequal, and that is the reason we have barely scratched the surface of the possibly of what can be done to re-imagine the university for a new South Africa. Part of that exciting possibility is to build a truly non-racial university, African and universal reflective of the aspirations of our Constitution. That is a social experiment that we can achieve, but that which we have hardly tried hitherto.

Of course, that is not a once off, but an ongoing, dynamic effort. My point is that we have hardly begun. In other words, the idea of transformation needs to be re-articulated a little beyond the mundane matters of race, gender equity compliance, however important those are for an equal society. My challenge is that we must not linger because the road ahead is beckoning. In my opinion, the positive thing I take out of the events at our campuses in recent years is that is that this generation must re-think the idea of the university for our times.

N Barney Pityana GCOB

PRESIDENT

Convocation of the University of Cape Town

Cape Town, 15 December 2016.

Vice-Chancellor's address to UCT Convocation, Thursday 15th December 2016:

Ladies and gentlemen, members of convocation,

It is my pleasure to give you the report of some highlights of the past year. I want, first, to talk about the protests linked to the national crisis in higher education; and second, to talk about the University's really outstanding academic year – the core business that we do: teaching, research and social responsiveness.

The National Crisis in Higher Education

It seems to me that the agendas of the campus tensions are really at three levels: the first is the national call for free education, a campaign which is really aimed at government policy to have free education for all. It's not something that is really in the hands of the vice-chancellors or the universities to address, as I think most students also understand.

There are two tendencies or groupings within the national student movement that have adopted slightly different strategies. One is a group that argues that since they don't have a direct impact on government to change policy, the only way that government can be affected, that pressure can be put on government, is to shut the universities down, particularly the major universities, the ones that are in the public eye, the ones that get the news. That shutdown, they believe, will eventually put so much pressure on government that government will make the change.

The second group, which I believe is the majority, is seeking rather for the universities to align themselves with their call for free education for all. Their goal is not the shutdown of the universities, it is a broader protest around the funding of higher education. Most of the student protestors that I have met and that I have engaged with are students who are serious about their studies, they are students who want to complete their degrees and they want to complete their degrees in the minimum time. Long-term disruption and shutdown does not work for them – their goal is to get the university to stand united with them against the government.

Is this simply an ideological campaign – perhaps mobilised by external parties with other agendas? Generally no. For many of these students we need to understand that higher education has become unaffordable. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), as you know, covers reasonably, adequately, the students who are below a certain income threshold around R120 000 per year. For students above that (other than at UCT, in fact), there is no funding system. The so-called missing middle are people who are above that R120 000 but still the costs of education are going to be more than they can afford. They come from salaried households, hence the income is above R120 000. They often find that in the first and second year of study, they can get loans from banks to cover the tuition fees, but then when they get to third or fourth year, their banks, and their credit is 'maxed out' and they cannot get further loans. They are forced to drop out of university because there is no funding for them. And this is where the main call for free higher education originates. The question of whether the University can and should align with that call is not straightforward, because while many of us, in fact I think all the vice-chancellors, agree that the missing middle students should be covered adequately by a financial aid system, we do not think it is feasible or desirable for wealthy people to be subsidised to the same extent that they are, and that the higher education system can benefit from having income from that group. Hence, there's not been widespread support in this environment, in the current economic environment, on what this country

can afford for free education for all. But it is a long-term goal, an ideal that we'd aspire to. Something which a stronger economy might be able to afford when most of the other urgent needs have been taken care of – such as early childhood development, housing, free schooling. So that's the first level of agenda.

The impact of national politics on campuses

The second agenda is really the spillover of national politics onto our campuses: an ANC that is divided and, some would say, tearing itself apart. COSATU is divided, with new and breakaway unions competing to recruit membership from amongst the significant group of workers and employees on the UCT campus, particularly since in-sourcing, who used to be represented by NEHAWU. NEHAWU is weak in the Western Cape, and other unions sometimes aligned against COSATU are jockeying for positions within the workforce, and so we have union issues spilling into the campus. We have political parties; EFF, PAC, groups within the student bodies such as SASCO, PASMA and DASO, contesting Student Representative Council (SRC) elections along what are often party-aligned lines. That general ferment, the service delivery protests in the communities that our students come from, spilling over in a way, into the campuses because this is a place where there is visibility, where the issues of accommodation and unemployment and poverty can be made highly visible. So we have the national situation, on the campuses, which of course is not something that the campuses can easily address or solve.

Campus specific issues

And then at the third level the agendas are often domestic, around campus specific issues. We have, for example, on the Afrikaans language campuses, the language policy issue, which has become the major issue and focus of protest. On some campuses, accommodation, the quality and the amount of accommodation, the fact that students are sleeping rough or sleeping in classrooms or in libraries because there isn't enough accommodation, is often the source of conflict. In many campuses the so-called financial exclusions that I have already mentioned, have been key. On our campus we've had financial aid for the missing middle for a long time, and so that's much less of an issue here, but it's an issue on many other campuses.

Decoloniality

And on the historically White, English campuses, the key issues have been around transformation and what has come to be called decolonisation: the sense that the campuses still have a White, Eurocentric culture, the sense that African, Black students and staff feel alienated in this environment. It's a task for all of us to understand why that is and to be able to hear it, to understand the realities of that experience. In some ways the Rhodes statue symbolised the 190-year colonial heritage of the university. It has roots in, and is modelled in some ways, on the Oxbridge models of the universities. You look at the architecture of the University, it tells you to some extent what the University aspires to be. If you walk through the passages of most of the buildings, the portraits or the photographs on the walls will be of the previous heads of departments, the previous deans, the previous professors, and not surprisingly over the last 180 years they are almost all White males. So the message for students coming from other backgrounds, particularly Black students and staff, is derived from what is reflected back to them; reflected back as role-models, as examples of excellence, as examples of the culture of this institution – and it is a White culture. And so a sense of alienation is pervasive. And it has many manifestations, whether it's about people's accents, it's about the stereotypes we all carry around with us and how we instinctively react to people who don't

fit the various stereotypes. These are the issues that have been dominant on our campus. And these are the issues that we have needed to address.

Expulsions and interdicts

And on our campus a particular issue has been the issue of disciplinary action against students. In February this year, we had a night of the so-called Shackville protests, when art works and portraits were burnt, when a bus and bakkie were burnt, and my office was petrol bombed. Following that protest, 12 students were disciplined, and were expelled or rusticated, were given significant sanctions and there were also interdicts against some students.

That has become, throughout the year, a source of protest and an issue which has prevented us from engaging. It came to a head around the SRC elections when one of the students who was interdicted, but had not yet been through a disciplinary tribunal and therefore had not been found guilty, was allowed to be an SRC candidate, but was not able to campaign. And that led to a protest where the other SRC candidates expressed solidarity with this candidate and became the leaders of the so-called SRC Candidates protest.

Perfect storm in September 2016

So, in a sense there was a perfect storm that came together in September, with the Minister announcing how he would deal with fee increases, with the judicial commission saying that it would only report next year instead of this year, and a local UCT disciplinary tribunal announcing its guilty findings in regard to the last three protesters, and the SRC elections being suspended.

Conflict resolution strategies

In dealing with the disruptions and declared intentions to shut down the university, we had a number of options. The campus and the Senate have been divided about the extent to which we should increase security and try to discipline further and prevent any disruption from happening, versus the extent to which we engage and talk and try to find a way forward. In our view (and we tried it) security at some point escalates resistance, escalates the noise and the disruption on campus and doesn't create an environment in which you can study. If you have a lot of security around, you may still have a peaceful protest with toyi-toying outside of the lecture theatre and the lecture doesn't take place.

Most of the protestors were *bona fide* students and would be allowed in to the lectures to participate and would then disrupt the lectures from inside. And there would be significant numbers of such *bona fide* students wishing to disrupt. We are not talking about 100 students. Because there are many different agendas on our campus, there has been an alliance of different causes but under a common protest banner. Those causes have therefore included financial issues, free education, some of the political issues I mentioned, the 'bring back our cadres': the campaign for those who had been disciplined; also the rape survivors raising issues around sexual harassment on campus, the LGBTI community, the transgender community. In addition there were issues that were specific to faculties. We had an occupation of the Health Sciences' Faculty offices where students raised numerous issues around assessment and around other perceived unfair practices that they believed had racial dimensions. And at the Hiddingh campus and at the College of Music, similar occupations took place around their own issues.

The point that I am trying to communicate is that this is not a small, radical, extreme group that is holding the campus to ransom. This is a widespread range of issues, with significant support. And while I believe there are only a few students who actually want to shut down the University, and invoke disruption, there were many who aligned themselves with the cause.

Now I want to make it clear that there was much protest behaviour which was completely unacceptable. There was violent activity, there was intimidation, forcing people out of their offices, preventing people from studying or going into the libraries or computer laboratories, setting off fire alarms in the residences at night, disturbing people who wanted to study.

None of that protest activity, in my view, is acceptable, and it should not go unpunished, but we also need to find a way through that. Our strategy has been to engage the students who do not support that sort of activity, but who want to find solutions to the real issues, in order to reduce the support for those who want to shut the University down and disrupt it as an end in itself. So our strategy has been to engage, to address the issues that could be addressed, to show that we are listening and that we understand the concerns of students who are feeling alienated. But also, as far as possible – and I gave an example of the disciplinary cases – to say that we have to take action. And, of course, to bring private security onto the campus when the rest fails, if we can't keep the peace with our own security.

The Agreement

I do not have time to elaborate the agreement, which is available on our website - https://www.uct.ac.za/usr/downloads/2016-11-07_UCT_resolution.pdf. I just want to emphasize that the clemency offered to the 12 who had been expelled or rusticated in order to enable over 20,000 to write exams, was contextualised in the framework of restorative justice that enables them to come back to complete their degrees on condition that they sign a declaration admitting to their wrongdoing and undertaking to abide by the student code of conduct in future, with the clemency being withdrawn should they breach those conditions.

The strategy and agreement have worked

I must conclude this part of the talk by saying I am very pleased that we managed to get an agreement at the twelfth hour, after midnight on the day that exams were going to start. My assessment, and the assessment of our Executive team, was that the exams would have been put at serious risk if we did not have some sort of agreement. We would have needed lots of security; we would have had police and private security inside and outside of every exam hall and across the campus. They would have had to stop groups from coming onto campus, since we have no access control. They would have struggled to identify which students were *bona fide* exam writers and which were not, because some students who may not have had anything to lose could still have come into the exams. And then, as has happened at other campuses, they could disturb other students, tear up scripts, make a noise. And to clear those disruptors out of an exam - we would have done that if we had to – would have been very disturbing for those writing. At University of the Western Cape and Cape Peninsula University of Technology, ultimately they had to bus students off to military sites to write their exams. At Wits and Rhodes they had security to frisk students down as they came into the exam hall. We could have managed the exams under those circumstances; it would have been much more unpleasant for the exam writers. They would have performed more poorly; many would have chosen not to write; some exams would have been disrupted and would have needed to be rescheduled.

Through the agreement that we achieved, we were able to write all of the exams without disruptions, without the threat of disruption. And I want to acknowledge the student protest leaders for being able to create the accountability that was necessary in order to do that. The residences were quiet, students could study, the exam halls, libraries and computer labs were open and peaceful. So I will not say that we completed the year successfully, because as you know we suspended classes, we had to move on to online learning, which was not a good substitute. Some courses are going to be taught in January next year because they involve practical classes which could not be completed, and some of those exams will be written at the end of January. But some 16 000 students wrote the exams. Eighty to one-hundred percent of the final-year students are qualifying and moving on and into the workplace. Those who are not final years are progressing to the next year of study.

Successful year for UCT's core business

I now want to turn to the second part of my report, which is to comment on the successful year we have had in terms of our core business— teaching and research and having an impact. Unfortunately, that does not catch the headlines, lacking sensation and frisson. But it is what we spent 90% of our time doing. And in that regard we once again had a hugely successful year.

Research

In terms of our research, we have five new A-rated scientists. We had another four A-rated scientists have their ratings renewed. That brings our total to 40, which is one-third of all the A-rated scientists in the country. There are 26 universities – we would have 7 instead of 40 if we were average.

If we include all the rated scientists, the number went up from 481 to 514 in one year, and has doubled since I became Vice-Chancellor in 2008. We have just released the research report, which is on the web. It reports on some of the huge successes of our researchers this past year. The number of publications reached a record high. Citations, which measure the impact of our research, how often it is quoted by other scientists, are also at a high and up on last year's.

The research grants that we have raised through contract research increased by 30% in the last year, exceeding the R1 billion mark, going to R1.3 billion. A significant number of foundations have supported new research initiatives. Earlier this year the AXA Research fund, a European insurance company foundation, endowed a Chair, held by Professor Mark New, Pro-VC and Director of the African Climate and Development Initiative. Just last week the Wellcome Trust announced its new Centres of Excellence and a Centre of Excellence was awarded to UCT. There are 11 in the world, 10 of them are in the UK, only one is outside of the UK, viz. here, in Infectious Diseases. The funding is in the region of R85 million over the next five years.

UCT remains the top ranked university on the continent and amongst the top in the world. In the most recent report of *Times Higher Education*, of BRICS and emerging economies, UCT is ranked fourth in the world, out of 300 universities. In April this year we were admitted to the International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU), a group of what was 10 universities, all from OECD countries, and we are the 11th university, the first addition since IARU was established 10 years ago. And they chose UCT because of what we bring to that august group. We bring a hub that connects into the continent, and we are a peer in research which has many strong relationships with those universities.

We launched new start-up and spin-out companies; there were more patents issued. This excellence attracts further financial support.

The Department of Alumni and Development receipted more than R328 million in philanthropic donations in the last year. Some of those philanthropic donations come from our convocation and alumni members and I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your loyal support and for your ongoing contributions.

We launched a capital campaign called Distinguishing UCT, which is to raise our endowment from R500 million to R1 billion, so in other words we have to raise R500 million, and to date we have raised more than R100 million. We raised a significant amount of money, about R85 million so far, to launch a neurosciences institute from philanthropic money, with renovations to a building which will create a new home for neurosciences at the Groote Schuur campus.

Teaching

Moving from research to teaching, we continue to invest heavily in our academic development programmes and that has manifested in our first-year course pass rates, showing an increase amongst all students, those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those from advantaged backgrounds. We implemented a new admissions policy in 2016. We admitted the first cohort of students in this new policy, which balances the race targets that we've had for a long time with affirmative action that targets socio-economic disadvantage. So we now have a set of criteria that looks at first-generation admissions, which looks at families who are dependent on social grants, kids coming from low-quintile schools, and they all get extra points now, regardless of race in the admissions process. It's too early to judge exactly the impact of that, but it is an important leadership signal nationally towards a non-racial, more equal society; towards indicating that it is not only about race, it's also about class and we want to address issues of inequality as well.

Transformation

Transformation has been the number one item on our agenda. It has been the focus of the strategic plan, approved by Senate in November and signed off by Council on 10 December. We have established a number of task teams that are looking at specific issues, such as the naming of buildings, the question of artworks, and, very importantly, the curriculum change working group that is stimulating interrogation of curricula across the university. We have had assemblies in all the faculties and many departments and engagements where people are hearing about the experiences of 'the other', sometimes for the first time, and are taking on board this sense that we all have to take on the responsibility and own the process of transformation and decolonisation.

Financial aid has been stepped up and we can be proud that we are not turning away any students who are academically eligible, and we support missing-middle students right up to the R600,000 threshold.

Perhaps one of the most significant issues is that a year ago we announced that we were going to insource the workers of six companies that had been outsourced in the 1990s. That has been a major project, successfully completed in record time. Five of the companies were insourced by 1 July, and the last, the catering company, in November. These employees are now part of the UCT family; their incomes have increased and in many cases by more than 60% as a result of this insourcing.

Students certainly played a role and so did the workers and their unions. The point is that it is a significant element of transformation and, once again, something that we are proud of.

Changes in leadership

There is much more to tell you about our successes, but I also need to report on the changes that are happening at the leadership level, because they are so significant that it would be remiss not to make mention of them. In 2016 we welcomed our new Registrar, Mr. Royston Pillay. We welcomed our new Dean of Law, Professor Penny Andrews; Dean of Commerce, Professor Ingrid Woolard; Dean of Health Sciences, Professor Bongani Mayosi; and we appointed, to take office in January, the new Director of the Business School, Professor Mills (Milford) Soko. We've also appointed, to take office in January, two new Deputy Vice-Chancellors: Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng, who will be the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Internationalisation; and Professor Loretta Ferris, who will be taking up the position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Transformation, which also covers Student Affairs.

I want to point out that amongst that leadership group, two Deputy Vice-Chancellors and four Deans and the Registrar, seven new senior people, there are three Black men, three Black women and one White woman. Together with the first woman Dean of Engineering the year before, I think the record shows that at the senior level, we are making great strides in transformation – something we can all be proud of.

Some of our successes are unfortunately bittersweet successes. We have recently been informed that two of our leaders have been appointed as vice-chancellors at other universities. The Dean of Humanities, Professor Sakhela Buhlungu, is going to become the vice-chancellor at the University of Fort Hare, and one of our deputy vice-chancellors, Professor Francis Petersen, is to become the vice-chancellor of the University of the Free State. Both would be moving in early 2017. And just a year and a half ago, Professor Wim de Villiers, the Dean of Health Sciences, became the vice-chancellor at the University of Stellenbosch. So we are the nursery for the leadership of the country's universities and we are very proud of that, of course, but the gains of others are undoubtedly our losses.

So, President of Convocation, thank you for giving me the time to give a full report. It's been a very full year, a difficult year for all of us, but I think a year that we have shown our mettle and we look forward to further progress next year.

Dr Max Price
Vice-Chancellor