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Double win for UCT GSB: Leading the way in transformative education and sustainability

The University of Cape Town's [Graduate School of Business \(UCT GSB\)](#) has earned two significant accolades: recognition that highlights its commitment to transformative and impactful education, and sustainability recognition that reinforces its commitment to responsible operations and environmental stewardship.

The UCT GSB recently received the prestigious Gold Award for Ecosystem Development at the 2025 European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) Excellence in Practice (EiP) Awards, and just days later, the Protea Hotel by Marriott Cape Town Waterfront Breakwater Lodge, situated on the UCT GSB campus, earned the coveted Green Key sustainability certification.

The Gold Award for Ecosystem Development recognises a case study on outstanding learning and development partnerships with measurable impact. At the same time, the Green Key sustainability certification – awarded by the Foundation for Environmental Education – affirms the hotel's commitment to environmental responsibility and positions it as a leader in sustainable hospitality in the region.

Education as ecosystem development

The Gold Award for Ecosystem Development case study, titled: "Empowering principals to transform schools", focused on a long-standing collaboration between the UCT GSB, the Principals Academy Trust (PAT), and the Capitec Foundation. The collaboration delivered a leadership programme transforming underperforming schools in South Africa's most marginalised communities.

It documents real-world outcomes. Over a decade, nearly 300 schools have benefited with marked improvements in academic performance, leadership effectiveness and community involvement.

"The UCT GSB is delighted by the EiP Gold Award win," said Jodie Martin, the head of executive education at UCT GSB. "The final product of the case study was a powerful portfolio of evidence about the transformational work done by all the stakeholders to uplift the South African educational system for educators, learners and their communities."

At the heart of the initiative is the belief that school principals are the catalysts of change. By mentoring serving principals – many of whom lead schools in socio-economically challenged areas, retired education leaders help instil a culture of accountability, strong leadership and visionary school management.

The case study underscores how this model has led to measurable improvements in learning culture, academic outcomes and overall school governance in more than 25% of schools in marginalised areas in the Western Cape. “Bringing back hope to our education system is the concept which the Principals Academy has put in place in Cape Town schools for over a decade,” said PAT CEO, Keith Richardson.

The EiP Awards are among the most prestigious accolades in the global business education community. For the UCT GSB, this is the second EiP Gold Award, having previously won in 2019 for its partnership with Standard Bank Corporate Investment Banking. Rayner Canning, the UCT GSB director of business development and executive education, said the award is also recognition of the broader vision and collaborative spirit embedded in the programme.

“It is a recognition of the important work being done in Africa by Africans through education to improve the prospects of a generation of young African school children,” he said.

A sustainable stay

The Green Key certification awarded to the Protea Hotel by Marriott Cape Town Waterfront Breakwater Lodge affirms its compliance with international environmental standards, including reducing energy and water consumption, managing waste effectively and lowering its carbon footprint.

“This milestone is a testament to Colin Naiker’s leadership and the dedication of the hotel and operational teams, whose commitment to embedding sustainable practices into every aspect of our operations has made this recognition possible,” said Thobile Dlamini, the director of hospitality at UCT.

Naiker, cluster general manager of the hotel, said the certification goes beyond operational efficiency. “This achievement is more than a badge – it’s a symbol of our commitment to sustainability, responsible tourism and protecting the beautiful environment we call home,” he said.

The benefits of the certification include environmental stewardship, guest satisfaction, cost efficiency, community alignment and reinforcement of UCT values.

Manfred Braune, UCT’s director of environmental sustainability said: “This achievement aligns with UCT’s environmental strategy to green all our campuses. Students staying at the hotel will experience sustainability first-hand, supporting UCT’s vision to become a living lab for sustainability.

Embodying Vision 2030

Both achievements – advancing educational impact and promoting sustainable operations – embody UCT’s [Vision 2030](#), which is anchored in the pillars of excellence, transformation and sustainability. From driving change in schools through leadership to reshaping infrastructure with environmental initiatives, the UCT GSB demonstrates how institutions can play a pivotal role in shaping a more equitable and sustainable society.

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