



Communication and Marketing Department
Isebe loThungelwano neNtengiso
Kommunikasie en Bemakingsdepartement

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa
Welgelegen House, Chapel Road Extension, Rosebank, Cape Town
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 5427/5428/5674 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 5628

www.uct.ac.za

12 November 2025

UCT virologist to unpack the power of immunity in an age of outbreaks



Professor Wendy Burgers

Photo: Supplied

Viruses have shaped both our biology and our societies. The University of Cape Town's (UCT) Professor Wendy Burgers, professor of virology in the [Department of Pathology](#), will reflect on how viral evolution and immune escape challenge our defences, and how vaccines harness the immune system for protection during her inaugural lecture.

Burgers's lecture, titled "In Defence of Us All: Engineering Immunity in the Age of Outbreaks" – will be held on Thursday, 20 November 2025 at 18:00 SAST in the New Learning Centre Lecture Theatre, Anatomy Building, on the health sciences campus. The lecture will be the last in UCT's academic calendar for 2025.

The lecture will trace the connection between fundamental discoveries in immunology and the collaborative platforms that enable vaccine development and pandemic preparedness. She will ask how science can build not only resilience but also equity in global health.

Burgers is the deputy director of the [Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine](#) (IDM) at UCT. Her research focuses on T-cell immunity, vaccine evaluation and the immune response to viruses.

She founded and leads the Cellular Immunology Platform at UCT, a hub for research and capacity development that works closely with biotechnology partners Afrigen and Biovac. Her work has been published in leading journals, including Nature, The Lancet and Science Translational Medicine.

Burgers is a Fellow of UCT and a recipient of the South African Medical Research Council Silver Medal. She has served on national advisory committees on COVID-19 vaccines and biotechnology.

A dedicated mentor and educator, she has trained and supported a diverse generation of African scientists, most of them women, while driving efforts to transform biomedical research and education. Her work reflects UCT's commitment to advancing science in service of society.

- Media interested in attending the event are requested to [RSVP](#).

Ends

Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

Thami Nkwanyane

Media Liaison and Monitoring Officer

Communication and Marketing Department

University of Cape Town

Rondebosch

Tel: (021) 650 5672

Cell: (072) 563 9500

Email: thami.nkwanyane@uct.ac.za

Website: www.uct.ac.za