

MONDAY MONTHLY

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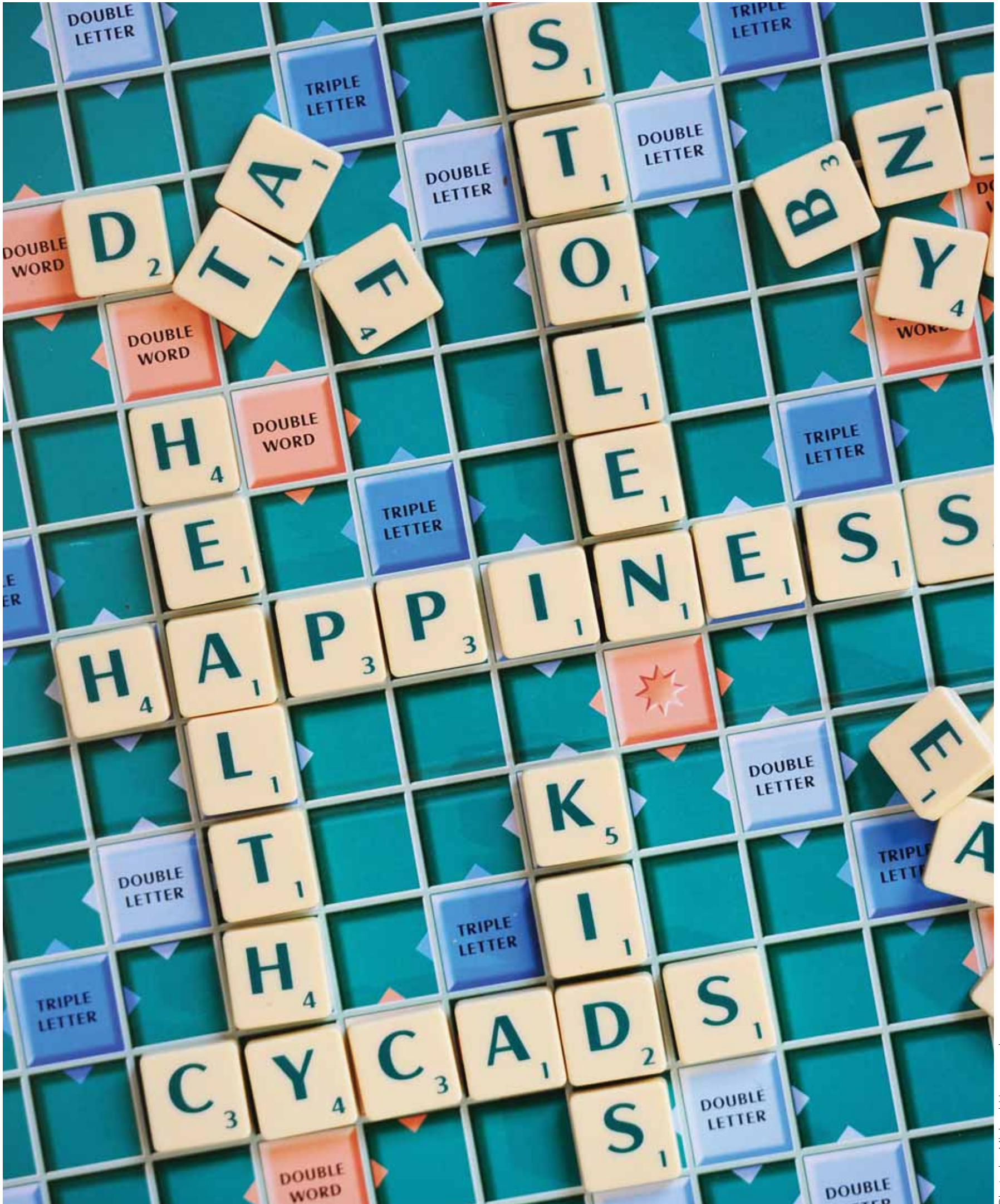


Photo by Michael Hammond

ON HAPPINESS

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STOLEN CYCADS

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HEALTHY KIDS

PAGE 4&5



Photo by Davide Gaglio



Photo by Michael Hammond



Photo by Sydelle Willow Smith



Photo by Michael Hammond

NEWS IN PICTURES

1 Birds in flight

A swift tern snatching the surface of the water to cool down on a very hot day. This photograph by Davide Gaglio, a master's student in the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, was the overall winner in *Exposure*, an annual photo competition and exhibition organised by Zoobots, UCT's Biological Society. Gaglio, an avid photographer, is currently researching the link between population dynamics, foraging behaviour and food abundance and distribution in the swift tern population. More of his images can be found at davygaglio.wix.com.

2 SRC 2015

International relations and public policy major Khanyisa "Baz" Pinini has been elected president of the 2015 Students' Representative Council (SRC). While the incoming council is made up of African Ornithology, was the overall winner in *Exposure*, an annual photo competition and exhibition organised by Zoobots, UCT's Biological Society. Gaglio, an avid photographer, is currently researching the link between population dynamics, foraging behaviour and food abundance and distribution in the swift tern population. More of his images can be found at davygaglio.wix.com.

3 City Desired

UCT's African Centre for Cities is hosting a wide-ranging exhibition aimed at helping Cape Town interrogate what kind of city it would like to be, one part of which profiles 10 Capetonians whose life experiences offer powerful insights into the fabric of the city. The biographies of a domestic worker, taxi boss, psychiatrist, urban farmer, environmental officer, spaza shop owner, violence counsellor, school principal, twin brothers who collaborate as artists, and an architect map the fine grain of a city awkwardly negotiating change. *City Desired* opens at 18h00 on 30 October in the City Hall and runs until 10 December. It is free, and open to the public.

4 Un-pinking the closet

A South African pride flag held high during a 2014 Rainbow Week march from north stop to Jammie Steps, organised by student-run organisation RainbowUCT. A week-long celebration in honour of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning (LGBTIQ) community and formerly known as Pink Week, Rainbow Week included discussions, documentaries, a talk by the first openly gay member of Parliament, Zakhele Mbhele, as well as the repainting of a pink closet in rainbow colours. "By un-pinking the closet", said chairperson of RainbowUCT Pam Dlamini, "our aim is to improve the inclusivity of all LGBTIQ people who don't particularly identify as pink."



Photo of cycad leaves in Kew Gardens taken by Ian Alexander. Licensed under Creative Commons via Wikimedia Commons.

Story by Carolyn Newton
Photo by Michael Hammond

Critically endangered cycads are disappearing from the wild and from botanical gardens, ripped up by the roots to feed the lucrative landscaping market. UCT researchers are using a novel method to help the Hawks combat the theft of these ancient plants.

A method that has been used to trace cocaine, explosives and banknotes is being applied for the first time to help combat the illegal trade in cycads. In a paper published in the *Journal of Forensic Sciences* and reported on in *Nature*, Kirsten Retief and colleagues at UCT and the South African National Botanical Institute (SANBI) describe their use of stable isotopes and radiocarbon dating to identify cycads removed from the wild.

Cycads are the world's oldest seed plants – they have been in existence for 340 million years – but they are also the most endangered plant group on the planet. South Africa is home to 38 indigenous cycad species, and is therefore an important centre for cycad diversity; however, 12 of those species are critically endangered, and three of them are classified by SANBI as extinct in the wild.

There are fewer than 100 cycads of the species *Encephalartos latifrons* left in the wild: it is this species that was targeted by thieves in two separate raids at Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden in Cape Town in August. The poachers stole 24 cycads, a haul worth more than R700 000.

"It was a very well-orchestrated operation," says uPhakamani Xaba, senior horticulturist at Kirstenbosch. "It was a rainy night on both occasions. They knew exactly which plants they were targeting – they even went for female plants, which are normally worth more than male plants."

Some of these slow-growing plants had been nurtured in the Kirstenbosch nurseries for 20 years, and were only planted a year or two ago.

Thefts like these pose an urgent challenge to those charged with protecting South Africa's cycads. Kirstenbosch has ramped up its security in the wake of the two raids, but plants in the wild remain extremely vulnerable.

"These plants sell by the centimetre," says Dr Adam West, senior lecturer in UCT's Department of Biological Sciences and principal investigator on the project. "A large, rare plant will sell for around R400 000. When you put a price tag like that on a plant, there's an incentive."

Trading in these endangered cycads is illegal – banned by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) – but enforcing the law relies on the ability to prove that a cycad in someone's garden came from the wild.

A range of techniques has been used in the war on poachers, including microchips and micro-dotting: spraying the plants with 100 or more minuscule dots, each of which contains an individualised reference code. However, neither of these methods is foolproof. Poachers have taken to X-raying plants and digging out the microchips, and both methods rely on going into the wild and tagging each plant at risk.

"SANBI approached us for help in developing a technique to trace cycads that showed up in suspicious locations where they'd never been seen before," says West. "Cycads have very localised distributions, so we can characterise their environment relatively well using stable isotope composition."

The researchers can take tissue out of the stems of cycads at different points and link it back to its original location.

"There's a lovely chronology in these plants," says West. "The more recent tissue will reflect the chemical signature of the current location; whereas further down the stem, the stable isotope composition of the tissue can be linked back to the wild."

When plants turn up in suspicious locations, UCT researchers turn detective. Retief, a researcher with both UCT and SANBI, and Michele Pfaf, scientific co-ordinator at SANBI, have accompanied the Hawks and the Green Scorpions on raids in Gauteng.

"I've been to a number of private gardens where the owners of cycads claim they are legitimate, and yet you can see burn marks and porcupine bites on them," says Retief. "Our method will test their stories."

"The advantage of this method," explains West, "is that the signature has been locked up in the plant's tissue, and you can't get rid of that. It's not like a microchip, which you can pull out. It's not like a DNA marker, which tells you about parentage but doesn't tell you about origin. And it's not like most methods where you have to go into the wild to label the plants – we can trace these plants without having seen them before."

There is a great sense of urgency, he says. "When we go out into the wild to survey some of those populations, we go to locations where they were, and there are just holes in the ground. These plants are disappearing from the wild over timeframes in the order of weeks and months, not years."

KEY FACTS

- Cycads are the world's oldest seed plants. They have existed for 340 million years, and have survived three mass extinctions.
- Globally there are 303 extant cycad species, of which 63% are classified as threatened.
- South Africa is a hotspot for cycad diversity, with 38 indigenous cycad species (over 10% of the world's cycads). Three endemic species are extinct in the wild, 12 are critically endangered, and four are endangered. Of the 12 critically endangered species, three species have not been seen in the wild since 2006, and four have fewer than 100 individuals remaining in the wild.
- This makes cycads more threatened than the rhino (the white rhino is near-threatened; the black rhino is critically endangered).
- More than 50% of our cycads face extinction in the near future.
- All South African cycads are on appendix 1 of CITES; therefore, trading of any wild cycad is illegal.
- Cycads are gymnosperms, like conifers: they reproduce through huge seed cones rather than producing flowers or fruit.
- Cycads were introduced to Kirstenbosch 100 years ago by its first director, Professor Harold Pearson. One of his first acts as director was to plant out his collection of 400 cycads, creating the cycad amphitheatre.
- *Encephalartos latifrons* occurs in the Eastern Cape. There are so few specimens left in the wild that they have to be pollinated by hand.



"The signature is locked up in the plant's tissue, and you can't get rid of that ... We can trace these plants without having seen them before."

Adam West



South African children drink three times the global average of certain soft drinks. Poor diet and exercise are contributing to rising obesity and overweight children, resulting in a D score in the 2014 *Healthy Active Kids Report Card*, co-authored by UCT's Prof Vicki Lambert.

TIPPING THE SCALES: SA'S KIDS TOO FAT, TOO SEDENTARY

Story by Helen Swingler
Photo by Michael Hammond

For the first time in many generations, children born from 2000 could have a shorter life expectancy than their parents, by up to five years. This is the result of poor diet and exercise habits, attendees at the launch of the 2014 *Healthy Active Kids Report Card* heard.

South African children don't play enough; they eat too much fast food, and they watch too much TV. And it shows: South Africa has slipped to a D in the 2014 *Healthy Active Kids Report Card* (HAKSA), down from a C- in 2010.

The latest HAKSA report reveals that two-thirds of adolescents eat fast food at least three times a week. They also spend an average of three hours a day in front of the TV during the week – and more on weekends. At best, only 50% of learners are active enough.

As a result, obesity rates are up from 2010: now 23% of girls and 10% of boys aged 10 to 14 are overweight or obese; while 27% of girls and 9% of boys aged 15 to 17 are overweight or obese.

Parents need to 'step up'

At the launch of the report in Cape Town on 19 September, co-author and head of UCT's Division of Exercise Science and Sports Medicine Professor Vicki Lambert urged parents to "step up" and be part of the solution.

"Parents need to model the behaviour they wish to see in their children, be aware of what their kids are eating, support their sporting and physical activity, and set reasonable boundaries for TV viewing and screen time."

The scientific panel that contributed to the report includes academics and experts from six universities, as well as from the South African Medical Research Council, the Sports Science Institute, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, and Discovery Vitality.

Targeting children aged between six and 18, the report provides an evidence-based benchmark – from peer-reviewed published literature and advocacy tools – to promote healthy living among children and inform health policy. It follows similar report cards in 2007 and 2010.

How South Africa scores

In the latest report, South African children scored a D for overall physical activity.

"Children need 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity every

day; however, South African children average only 20 minutes of daily activity," said Lambert. "One vehicle [we can use to change that] is through policy, targeting the school timetable."

Transportation received a C-. Many children walk to school, which is laudable, but the flipside is that 20 to 50% of fatalities among children up to the age of 14 are pedestrian deaths.

Fruit and vegetable intake also scored a C-. Good news, however, is that school vegetable gardens are on the increase.

School tuckshops, fast-food intake and the intake of sugar-sweetened beverages scored an F-.

"Despite limited resources and poor food security, children buy food at the tuckshop or from informal vendors. And they don't offer healthy choices."

As for diet, poverty and escalating food prices remain barriers to healthy eating, adds Lambert. Many of these factors precipitate "stunting",

and the explosive combination of

malnutrition and a predisposition to obesity.

There is some good news, however: fewer children are going to bed hungry, and physical activity at schools is growing. South Africa, said Lambert, has produced some "cutting-edge" legislation (which is currently under consideration) limiting the marketing of unhealthy foods to children. (See "Feast Yours Eyes" on page 5)

Clearly, there's work to be done. "We want to create a vision for what we want to see in 2016, when the next report card is due," said Lambert.

How South Africa compares

The report also shows how South Africa – home to 19 million children – compares to 14 other countries across nine health indicators.

On this list, we're in joint-last place in sedentary behaviour; among the bottom rungs of countries surveyed for school health and lifestyle support; and in the middle for organised sports participation, overall activity rates, and community support.

In stark contrast, South Africa ranks near the top for government investment and strategies to promote healthy lifestyles in children.

"This suggests a gap in policy implementation," added Lambert, "and it may take some time to realise government investment in policy and programmes."

"She advocates "whole of school" support for healthy eating and physical activity: regular weighing of children, national tuckshop guidelines, and capacity-building for teachers to promote physical activity and physical education."

Children also need more support from their parents, she added. Parent activism is rising in countries such as the UK and Australia, where they're taking up issues (such as sweet counters at supermarket checkout points) in social media.

"Focusing on obesity in women could benefit future generations," says Alaba, whose talk on the topic won the best staff presentation prize at the school's second research day in September.

The greater burden and huge costs to individuals, households, the health system and the economy in the long

FEAST YOUR EYES

Story by Helen Swingler

Nearly 50% of food ads – predominantly for franchised fast food, sweetened drinks and desserts – flight during family viewing times. What are the implications for the food choices and health of young children in South Africa, and what can be done about it?

Research published in the March edition of the Human Sciences Research Council's *Policy Brief* shows that adverts for franchised fast food, starchy foods, sweetened drinks, and desserts and sweets dominate the advertising material in family viewing time between 17h00 and 19h00.

Nearly 50% of food ads appear during this slot.

Equally concerning is that 67% of alcohol adverts are flighted during family and children's viewing time, the latter between 15h00 and 17h00. This raises huge ethical questions about what is advertised to children, says co-author Dr Nelia Steyn of UCT's Division of Human Nutrition.

Adverts for health-enhancing foods such as fruit and vegetables made up only 1% of advertising.

The findings are based on research in 2012 by the HSRC, the South African Medical Research Council and Athabasca University, Canada. The research surveyed the extent of food advertising to children by the SABC across its four broadcasting stations.

The researchers found that most food ads shown to children and adults did not encourage healthy eating, despite claims to the contrary, as the foods were high in fat, salt and/or sugar.

While there are regulations about labelling food products, there are, as yet, none governing advertising food to children on TV, says the report.

It adds that in 2007 the Department of Health published a draft Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and

Disinfectants Act, which included prohibitions on advertising unhealthy foods: crisps, confectionery, fast food and fizzy drinks.

But the draft act was put on hold following an outcry from industry and the public.

The outcomes are reflected in the rising incidence of obesity and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and heart disease, says Steyn.

"And these patterns are often set in childhood," she adds. "Government is aware of it: there's been a lot of research, and it's time they made a commitment."

In 2012 Steyn and her co-investigators wrapped up a four-year research project in 100 lower-quintile Western Cape schools in rural and urban settings to isolate factors that contribute to non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

The province carries a high burden of diabetes, and being overweight is a contributing risk factor. The project focused on the schools' pupils, their parents and their teachers.

Of the children who bought food at the school tuckshops, most chose filling, energy-dense foods: fried food and food high in sugar and fat – the infamous chip roll (a bread roll filled with crisps) leading the way.

"They are hungry children: they want full tummies," says Steyn, adding that their choices should be seen against a broader backdrop: poverty, gangsterism, sexual abuse and violence, and alcohol and drug abuse.

In this light, nutrition and exercise are non-issues. (After Steyn's interventions at the schools, they measured improvements in nutrition knowledge, but not in behaviour.)

"Their priorities are more extreme." School tuckshops were also not about food: in many schools these facilities are run primarily for profit and fundraising purposes. Little attention is paid to providing healthy options, which also tend to be more expensive.

Steyn suggests a simple intervention: government should issue a list of prohibited food and drink items for tuckshops and feeding schemes.

"The Department of Health must lead this initiative," she adds. "And it should be extended to school events and sports days."

But perhaps the most perturbing finding of the research is that teachers were identified as a high-risk group.

More than 70% of the educators surveyed were overweight or obese. Not only were they inactive; they also had "unacceptably high" cholesterol and glucose levels; higher than the average adult.

While Steyn points to their difficult and often demoralising working conditions, she's concerned that they make poor role models for thousands of impressionable children.

"We want to develop a wellness programme for our teachers, something that's internet-based and sustainable; something they can take home."

A healthy take-out.



A citizen-driven initiative, Open Streets, is trying to change how streets in Cape Town are used – so that they become more friendly for pedestrians, cyclists, skateboarders and children, not just cars. This photo was taken along Rubusana Street during Open Streets in Langa in October 2013.

SADDLE UP

Story by Helen Swingler
Photo by Lisa Burnell

In a country where children are becoming increasingly overweight as a result of sedentary lifestyles, cycling is one way to get them to burn up calories while moving from A to B. But are our city's roads built for cyclists?

The number of fatalities among cyclists on South African roads is twice that of the Netherlands, where bicycles are a highly utilised means of transport.

The comparison gives an indication of how unsafe cycling is in South Africa, says Associate Professor Marianne Vanderschuren, a road and transport expert in the Department of Civil Engineering.

Vanderschuren, who came to this country from the Netherlands 15 years ago, says she thinks twice before getting on a bicycle.

"South Africa has adopted the US road system with its 'overdimensioned' broad lanes, even in the suburbs: roads that people generally don't walk or cycle on."

But things are changing, albeit slowly. She slaps a weighty document on her desk.

"This is almost done: it's the first time we've created non-motorised facility guidelines on how to design roads equitably."

By this, she means bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly. This tome is to be presented to the national Department of Transport. It's dense with technical drawings and information; a tool designed to guide road engineers and give them a new way of looking at the usage of South Africa's road network.

Vanderschuren believes it will pave the way for practices that will be set in law.

Change is already evident, even among the old-school *padmakers* who have been in the job for years.

"They know today's roads need to be shared for sustainability and equity."

In the city, too, cycling infrastructure has grown. But it's not yet enough, she adds.

Motorists aren't yet accustomed to accommodating cyclists on the road, and Pedal Power's recommendation of a 1.5m gap between car and bike, though laudable, is not legal.

"The legal distance is 1m, and only in the Western Cape," says Vanderschuren, "but our research shows that most vehicles pass cyclists with a gap of 80cm or less on average."

What's on her wish list? First, children should be able to cycle on pavements provided they adhere to a commuter speed of less than 20km/h. Second, driver education is paramount.

"Given South Africa's road safety issues, it's almost impossible to teach children to cycle safely. And it's a vicious cycle: most affluent children, cocooned by cars, never learn to judge speed and distance."

Hopefully, the guidelines destined for government will help to change that.



Stories by Ambre Nicolson
Photo by Michael Hammond

The idea of happiness – what it is, who has it and how we can get more of it – gets a lot of attention these days. Sadly, almost all the literature on the subject is based on the experience of white, educated, industrialised, rich and developed (WEIRD) people from high-income countries. In light of this, a recent symposium organised by UCT drew together thinkers from the disciplines of philosophy, psychiatry and classics to examine happiness in our local context.

PSYCHIATRY

IS HAPPINESS GOOD FOR YOU?

Should psychiatry as a profession be working towards creating happiness? This is just one question among many posed by psychiatrist and UCT lecturer Dr Kerry Louw.

Do we feel pressure to be happy?

Turn to the index of most psychiatric textbooks, and you won't find much mention of happiness. "We don't have a neat definition for happiness within psychiatry," observes Louw. "With a growing focus on the recovery model, there is potentially a place for dialogue with patients about happiness and well-being, but in current clinical settings we rarely speak with patients about what happiness means to them." In the case of psychiatric literature, one of the most famous citations of happiness is the tongue-in-cheek 1992 paper by RT Bentall titled "A proposal to classify happiness as a psychiatric disorder", in which he claims happiness is irrational and should be renamed 'major affective disorder, pleasant type'.

While the paper is more a criticism of the methods of psychiatric diagnosis than a realistic proposal, according to Louw it does highlight the potential harm (associated with being happy) of feeling you have greater control over your environment than you really do. In her words: "Looking at the situations

of many of our patients today who come from toxic home situations or multi-generational dysfunctional families, they have almost no control over their environments. For them, feeling more in control than they actually are may be harmful."

Within local popular culture and across global social media there is also enormous pressure on people to 'be happy', according to Louw. "Is this idea of happiness really a fair portrayal of well-being, or does it gloss over the necessary suffering that accompanies any life?" she asks. "Especially given the context of many of our patients, is this idea of happiness realistic, or does it set up impossible expectations for people?"

Should psychiatrists be working towards creating happiness?

Louw describes several ways that psychiatry attempts to increase happiness in individuals: "There is of course positive psychology, which advocates supporting positive emotions rather than treating negative symptoms. While there have been positive results achieved, to my mind it does sound a little too good to be

true, on the grounds that it fails to take into account the complexity of human relationships and experience."

She also points out the huge increase in the prescription of anti-depressants since the advent of widely available SSRIs (selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors).

"I think this is indicative of the fact that we are living in a time of two opposing views, between neuroscience (and the idea that every symptom should be targeted pharmacologically) and the more ancient principles of mindfulness (and the benefits of non-invasive and non-chemical forms of therapy, such as exercise). While I think that we need to identify depression, we should be careful not to over-medicate or pathologise people who are merely dealing with very difficult emotions."

Happiness is good for you

There are physical consequences to being depressed or experiencing negative emotions such as chronic stress – Louw cites examples such as increased risk of diabetes, stroke, cardiovascular disease, and less

positive outcomes in diseases such as HIV – but is the opposite also true: does happiness make you more physiologically well?

According to Louw, yes – to a degree. "Emotional vitality has been found to be associated with more positive outcomes in cardiovascular disease patients, and overall increased longevity," she says. "In a large, prospective (with a mean follow-up of 15 years), population-based study of over 6 000 participants by Kubzansky, it was found that emotional vitality was protective against new-onset coronary heart disease; and furthermore, that there was something intrinsic about being happy – as opposed to the lack of being depressed – that had positive and restorative effects on people's physiological health."

In conclusion, Louw advocates finding a balance between allowing for depressive realism – the fact that feeling less than happy might be a rational way to respond to personal circumstances or environment – while also looking at ways to increase emotional vitality so as to encourage both emotional and physiological well-being.

5 WAYS HAPPINESS IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

1. Happiness boosts the production of immune-boosting hormones such as serotonin, dopamine, relaxin and oxytocin
2. People who report being happy recover better from illness and surgery
3. Happy people have been shown to have lower blood pressure
4. Cancer patients who report a positive state of mind have better survival rates
5. The incidence of cardiovascular disease has been found to be lower in people who describe themselves as having a high level of emotional vitality

PHILOSOPHY

HAPPINESS AND VIRTUE THEORY

UCT philosopher Dr Tom Angier explores what we mean when we talk about happiness and well-being, arguing that there is a necessary connection between living a morally good life and achieving a state of well-being.

What are happiness and well-being? In Angier's words: "In contemporary philosophy, there is a trichotomy of categories making up our ideas around these concepts: happiness (as a psychological state of mind comprised of things such as contentment), objective well-being (conditions necessary to flourish, such as shelter), and virtue or moral goodness.

"They're considered not to have much to do with one another," says Angier. "I argue that developing virtue is necessary to well-being, although not sufficient.

"I think a central obstacle to my argument is the accusation of moralism, a common accusation in contemporary literature, that argues that the idea that 'self-fulfilment' and

living a virtuous life are distinct; or in other words that even if you're a really horrible person, you might be capable of being quite happy," says Angier.

"This implies some assumptions about what the moral is," argues Angier. He describes the case of Angela, a tired diplomat who postpones her retirement in the interests of doing her duty to the government she serves. In this case, Angier argues that from an Aristotelian moral viewpoint, Angela would not be obliged to continue working, since the Aristotelian conception of virtue is less demanding than, for example, a Kantian moral standpoint, which would argue that we are under a moral duty to act according to the categorical imperative (the idea in this case being that

acting for the moral good is an unconditional and universal obligation). On the other hand, according to Angier, an Aristotelian might see Angela's actions as being good, but not necessary.

"Nonetheless, in Aristotle's view a flourishing genuine life is unattainable without suffering," says Angier. "In fact, the Aristotelian view covers how best to include suffering into our lives, because managing suffering is required in order to develop virtues such as courage, temperance and generosity, which are required to live a good life."

In other words, to have insufficiently developed virtues is to be unable to attain a state of well-being. For example: courage – the idea of facing danger for noble ends

– may cause suffering; but it's necessary to attain its development as a virtue in order to live a flourishing life, and thereby attain a state of well-being.

"I also disagree with the modern conception, seen so often, that self-fulfilment and virtue are separate on the grounds of sentimentalism. According to positive psychologists, welfare must be protected from pain and suffering; but according to the Aristotelian view, protecting people from suffering actually means arresting their development of virtues, and thereby harming their ability to live a good and flourishing life."

PHILOSOPHY

LIVING WELL BY UBUNTU

Philosophy Professor Thaddeus Metz explores how the ubuntu tradition views 'the good life', and how this compares to a traditional Western view of how to live well.

In 2007 Metz attended an ubuntu imbizo, in which an elderly woman remarked that "the problem for me with being poor is that I don't have any money to give away".

These words capture the crux of Metz's argument: that the tradition of ubuntu has an important role to play in understanding the importance of human relationships to living a good life.

In describing salient Western ideas of what it means to live a good life, Metz speaks both of philosophical approaches to well-being (such as hedonism) and psychological approaches to mental health (such as being free of suffering, being able to apprehend and cope with

reality, or living autonomously). In his view, both are characteristically individualist, making no essential reference to others.

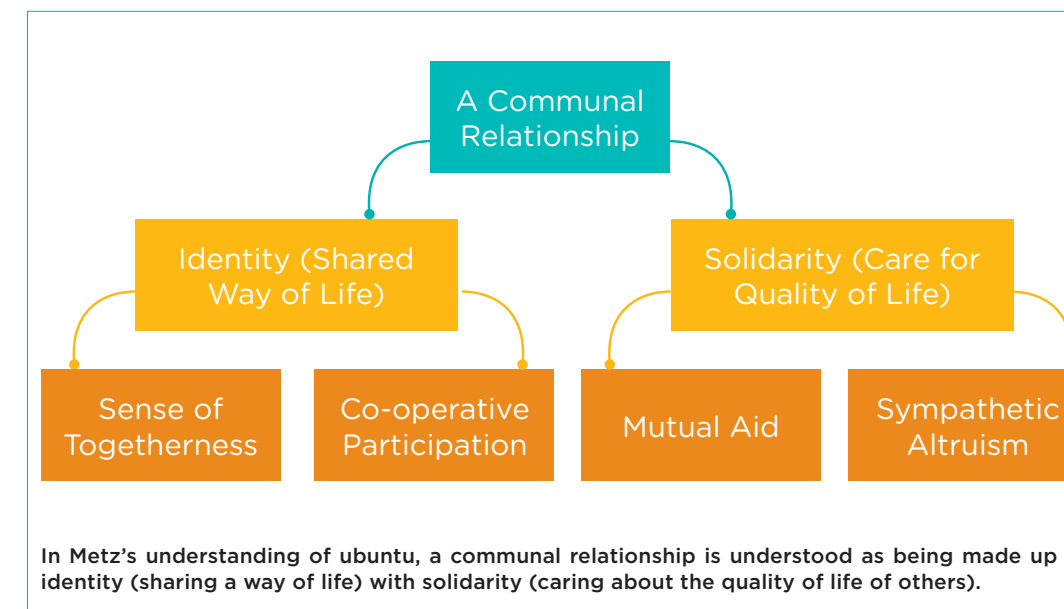
"The problem with individualism is that it fails to explain why things like autism, narcissism or ADHD (among many other forms of mental ill health) are bad," explains Metz. "On the other hand the tradition of ubuntu, which is often described as the idea that a person is a person through other persons [or in Metz's definition, the tradition of honouring friendly relationships – see diagram below] is inherently relational."

Through an understanding of ubuntu, these states of mental ill-

health identified can be seen as being facets of an undesirable life, because – in Metz's words – they "inhibit communal or loving relationships with other persons; or worse, are examples of 'unfriendly ones'".

"I don't make any claim that ubuntu is sufficient as a way to explain how to live a good life," says Metz, "but I am arguing that ubuntu is necessary to such an understanding. Overall, I think the best approach is to combine the rationality of the Western tradition of individualism with the relationality of the Southern African tradition of ubuntu."

Read more in Metz's book *Meaning in Life*.



CLASSICS

A FOUR-PART DRUG TO SECURE HAPPINESS

Associate Professor of Classics Clive Chandler explains what Epicurean physics has to do with happiness.

"Who would have thought you could begin a conversation about happiness with mention of an ancient artefact?" starts Chandler.

He continues to describe how Diogenes, a wealthy man who lived in the city of Oenoanda around AD 120, in what is now southern Turkey, commissioned an inscription – thought to run to over 80 metres in length – on a large portico (or porch) that describes the philosophy of the ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus. Fragments of this inscription began to be discovered late in the 19th century, and made an important contribution to our understanding of Epicurean philosophy.

Epicurean philosophy is based on materialism, and the idea that pleasure is the greatest good. But pleasure in this instance is less about hedonism, as it is generally understood, and more about the idea that living a moderate and simple life gives the best chance of attaining a state of katastematic pleasure, which is made up of *ataraxia* (a state of mental tranquillity) and *aponia* (the absence of physical pain and discomfort), among others. Katastematic pleasure, in the eyes of an Epicurean, is the highest form of happiness.

Given the materialist conception of Epicurean physics – that the universe is comprised only of atoms (the smallest possible particles) and the void – it is no surprise that both the above states are seen as physical.

"Seeing the soul as a physical entity means that it is not surprising that the treatment of what we might call unhappiness is described by the Epicureans using the language of medicine. In other words, philosophy is seen as a kind of medical treatment for the soul."

So, what treatment does Epicurus recommend? According to Chandler, the term *tetrapharmakos*, or four-part cure, is based on the name of a folk remedy poultice made up of four ingredients: pitch, pine, beeswax, and animal fat.

"As such, the *tetrapharmakos* can be seen as something simple, almost like a form of self-medication," he says. The Epicurean *tetrapharmakos* states the following:

Do not fear God,
Do not worry about death:
What is good is easy to get, and
What is terrible is easy to endure.

In Chandler's words: "The *tetrapharmakos* was something you used when you had already accepted the Epicurean philosophy; as such, I think it was something that was designed to be 'taken' in times of stress."

So what would an Epicurean have understood these apparently simple lines to mean? "We have the power to secure happiness for ourselves. Our intellect is responsible for all sorts of false opinions which cause us anxiety and discomfort, but if we use the intellect properly to scrutinise whether what we believe we want is natural and necessary, it can be the source of our mental health instead." Strong medicine indeed.

OPINION



PUTTING OUR PRINCIPLES WHERE OUR MOUTH IS

Prof David Benatar and Dr Elisa Galgut
Department of Philosophy

Laudably, UCT condemns unfair discrimination. The university has a proud history of having spoken out against apartheid, and commits itself, in its mission statement, to redressing past injustices and promoting “a more equitable and non-racial society”. However, there is one serious injustice that UCT routinely ignores; and in so doing, both tacitly accepts and actively promotes the infliction of enormous suffering and death on almost unimaginable numbers of victims.

Every year in South Africa, well in excess of a *billion* animals are killed for food after having led lives of misery and torment. The numbers are staggering: 2.6 million pigs, 2.9 million cattle and calves, over 6 million sheep, lambs and goats, and 1 billion broiler chickens (that's over 2.7 million chickens *per day*). In addition, approximately 480 million fish are killed; most for direct human consumption, but about a third for animal feed and other purposes. And these figures are from only the major categories in the formal sector.

Not only are the numbers of animals killed by the meat, poultry, dairy and fishing industries immense; so is the suffering. Most sows are still kept in gestation crates so small they cannot turn around. Egg-laying hens – 24 million of them in South Africa at any given time – are de-beaked, and some de-clawed, without anaesthetic before being crammed into cages so tightly that they are unable to spread their wings. They live their short, wretched lives in an area the size of an A4 piece of paper. A further 24 million chicks – the males, regarded as ‘wasteful by-products’ – are killed, usually by being ground up alive. Cows, impregnated in order to lactate, suffer great psychological distress at the loss of their calves, which are removed before they are weaned. Every year more than 200 000 male calves, useless to the dairy industry, are killed at birth or sold into impoverished settlements,

where, deprived of their mothers' colostrum, most die in infancy. Fish can suffer bariatric trauma when hauled from the depths. They then die from asphyxia, if they are not decapitated or disembowelled first.

This enormity of suffering and death is not directed towards eliminating worse ills, and thus cannot be justified on this basis. On the contrary, all of these animals are slaughtered merely to satisfy trivial gustatory desires. Animal products are necessary neither for our survival, nor – according to our best science – for our health.

Most people say that they are opposed to making animals suffer and die *unnecessarily*. If inflicting pain and death on animals for the mere pleasure of humans is not unnecessary, it is not clear what *would* count as ‘unnecessary’.

Animal suffering goes unnoticed by most people. Consumers have entered into an unholy alliance with farmers and retailers – the consumers don't ask, and the farmers and retailers don't tell. A conspiracy of denial surrounds our eating practices, to guard our consciences against what we know is morally unacceptable. If our neighbours treated their dog in the way in which farm animals are treated, we would be outraged.

Some may argue that it is morally acceptable to eat free-range animal flesh and products. This argument is problematic, for several reasons.

First, there is no legal definition of ‘free-range’ in South Africa that binds farmers to welfare-appropriate standards. Thus, although free-range chickens, for example, are not caged, they are often densely packed in barns and may still be de-beaked; calves are removed from free-range cows used in milk production. Second, all free-range animals in the formal sector are sent to slaughter. Although there are supposed to be veterinarians at every abattoir, at least on a part-time basis, to oversee animal welfare, covert investigations have shown that atrocities occur regularly. This is not in the least surprising. The large volume of animals slaughtered renders it practically impossible to guarantee humane treatment.

Some may argue that by paying attention to animal suffering, we detract from the suffering of humans, and that animal welfare must wait its turn until issues such as racism and poverty have been resolved. But this is clearly a false dilemma. No one would suggest that we put on the back burner the fight against sexism or interpersonal violence until we have redressed the racist legacy of apartheid. There is no reason that these issues cannot – or should not – be addressed simultaneously. Moreover, unlike other social ills, fighting animal exploitation is relatively straightforward – all one has to do is change one's shopping habits!

“A conspiracy of denial surrounds our eating practices, to guard our consciences against what we know is morally unacceptable. If our neighbours treated their dog in the way in which farm animals are treated, we would be outraged.”

To date, UCT – like most of humanity – has failed to recognise the enormous harms that animals endure. By providing meat and other animal products at official functions, the university endorses and promotes these practices. It is hard to imagine that this barbarism will not, in time, be a source of institutional shame, and that future generations will not wonder how their predecessors – including our generation – could have exhibited such insensitivity. Why wait to redress what will then be a past injustice? Why not, rather, stop the injustice now? To this end, we call on UCT to put its principles of justice where its mouth is, and to pledge to take animal suffering off the menu at university functions. Nor should the perpetuation of animal misery and death be outsourced to other campus vendors.

This proposal will strike many as outrageous. They should pause to remember other proposals that were once – and in some places still

are – greeted with similar outrage. These include the proposals that a person's sex or ‘race’ should not be a bar to being admitted to university, or the suggestion that homosexuals should enjoy equality before the law. In such cases, the burden of proof was placed on those who opposed discrimination, even though it was actually borne by those who defended it. Similarly, now, the burden of proof lies not with those who think that inflicting suffering and death on animals is wrong, but on those who think it is permissible to inflict these unspeakable harms on animals for human pleasure.

The authors would like to thank Compassion in World Farming SA and the NSPCA (the National Council of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) for providing valuable information regarding farm animals in South Africa.



Photos of UCT's residential dining halls by Michael Hammond

OPINION

WHEN ‘TEACHING OR RESEARCH’ BECOMES ‘TEACHING AND RESEARCH’

How is UCT integrating teaching with its drive to become more research-intensive? Shanali Govender from the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching reflects on the demands of balancing teaching and research activities at UCT.

In a recent interview, Craig Calhoun, director and president of the London School of Economics and Political Science, surfaces the perennial tension within higher education between research work and teaching. Calhoun argues that “part of what we should be struggling for in the reinvention of the university is an ‘education first’ understanding of it”.

While many universities continue to struggle with reconciling the demands of research and teaching activities, there is little doubt that an integrated focus on these pillars of university life is central to the work of most UCT academics. From the university's most formal documents to the lived life of the university, it is clear that relevance and success on this campus is increasingly strongly related to knowledge creation and dissemination. Excitingly, this dissemination is characterised on paper, and increasingly in lived experiences, by an emphasis on openness in the widest sense, and on ongoing learning.

From mission statement to strategic plan, research is seldom mentioned without teaching. And in those instances where research is mentioned alone, it is almost inevitably followed by words such as ‘dissemination’, ‘networking’, and ‘impact’, making clear that for research to be useful, it must move through society. Indeed, if not specifically taught, research

must at least be shared in the service of learning.

In a recent Senate meeting, the draft of UCT's Research Strategy was shared for comment. Point 9 states:

We recognise that our plans to improve our research performance must be constructed in such a way that they are fully consistent with the teaching and learning mission of the university and affirm the necessity for differentiated expectations with regard to the research and teaching performance of individual staff members in order to deliver most efficiently on both goals. Neither research nor teaching should be rewarded to the detriment of the other.

The draft Research Strategy also addresses the term ‘research-led’, arguing that it undervalues the teaching and learning functions of the university. Drawing on Gerhard Casper's description of a research-intensive institution, the draft Research Strategy emphasises that research, teaching and learning are mutually dependent in the context of higher education, asserting, “This is how UCT sees itself”.

The extent of institutional support

No matter how fascinating, documents only tell part of a story. A key marker for the state of teaching and learning

at UCT is the extent of institutional support in terms of people, money and facilities that are made available. The creation of a deputy vice-chancellor position focused on strategic issues, specifically teaching and learning, in January 2012 points to institutional support. Similarly, the establishment of a Senate-level teaching and learning committee and seven reporting sub-committees brings into focus the academic governance of teaching and learning. An increased focus on the importance of teaching activities for promotion, including the establishment of an academic teaching-rich track and various teaching grants, is further evidence of a university intent on entrenching teaching at the heart of its activities.

The various teaching grants supported by the university indicate support for innovative teaching activities in material ways. When we consider the additional range of support services offered through CHED (the Centre for Higher Education Development), it becomes clear that while teaching voices may struggle to be heard in other institutions, at UCT, these voices hold key positions on the stage.

The place where teaching is either most clearly valued or side-lined is in the offices and classrooms of the staff of UCT. Not all of us have the pleasure of observing our colleagues at work on a frequent basis. What we do have

is a wonderful opportunity to peep into their classes via the annual UCT Teaching and Learning Conference – an invaluable opportunity to take the temperature of teaching and learning across UCT.

2014 Teaching and Learning Conference

Held every October for the last four years, the UCT Teaching and Learning Conference is being hosted this year in the Kramer Building on middle campus on Monday 20 October. While academic conferences have something of a reputation for being serious affairs, this conference is fundamentally a celebration of the kinds of innovative and responsive teaching work being done by UCT staff. We're thrilled by the record number of conference submissions from every faculty. Presenters range from assistant lecturers to professors – all enthused by teaching and learning either as formal research, or reflective practice, or some wonderfully generative combination of the two.

Many presentations are offered by departmental or interdepartmental teams. This collaborative focus on teaching practices points to the communal and interdisciplinary nature of teaching at UCT. Such a willingness to open ourselves up as teachers (and researchers of teaching) to communal scrutiny can only bode well.

This year there are staff members talking about learning at a theoretical level; about language and how it functions in UCT classrooms; about curriculum shift and its consequences for shaping the people we help to make; about technological innovations and how these can change our students' experiences of learning; and about matters of social responsiveness.

Building on previous years, the conference has invited some alternative formats, so, in addition to more formal presentations, we have several panel presentations and a number of workshops during the day. Teas and lunches provide a generous opportunity for conference attendees to network, study the poster presentations, or browse the innovation fair. The innovation fair hosts stands from various internal and external support structures, and representatives will be available during teas and lunches to answer questions or set up meetings for further discussion.

For conference details, head to cilt.uct.ac.za, and follow @CILT_UCT and #TLC2014.



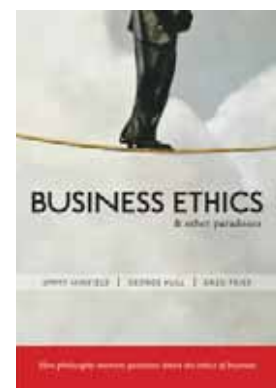
Photo by Michael Hammond

“From the university's most formal documents to the lived life of the university, it is clear that relevance and success on this campus is increasingly strongly related to knowledge creation and dissemination.”

Shanali Govender

BOOKSHELF

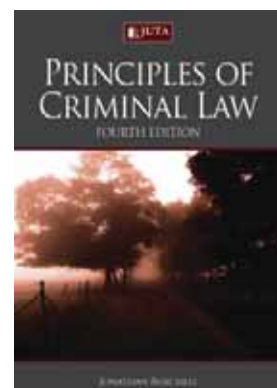
Recent releases by UCT's staff, students and extended community.



Business Ethics & Other Paradoxes

Jimmy Winfield, George Hull and Greg Fried

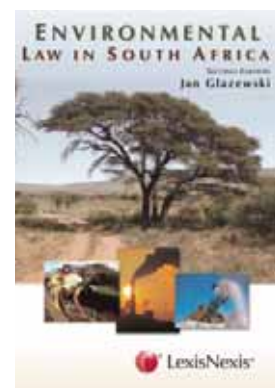
The moral challenges facing business graduates in their vocations have become increasingly apparent in recent years. Business professionals are required to take decisions that affect not only their own welfare, but also that of their colleagues, employees, investors, and society at large. In addition, businesspeople increasingly have to give an account of their behaviour, from an ethical point of view in the public domain. This book is suitable for teaching ethics and critical thinking skills to business and accounting students, and also to business professionals.



Principles of Criminal Law

Jonathan Burchell

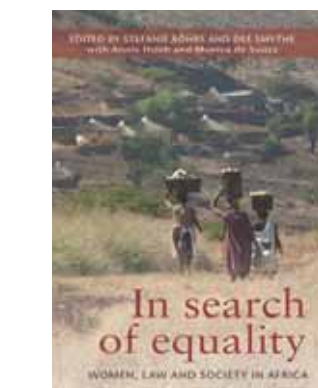
The fourth edition of this well-cited work on criminal law includes thorough examinations of comprehensive legislative changes to the law on sexual offences and the treatment of child offenders. It also revisits traditional aspects of criminal law such as the principle of legality, causation, the defences of provocation and consent, common purpose liability, and the use of force by the police, as well as more contemporary issues such as organised crime, sentencing discretion and child sexual experimentation.



Environmental Law in South Africa

Jan Glazewski

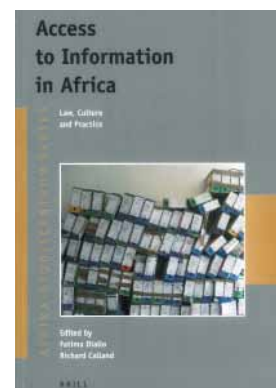
This comprehensive book is Glazewski's chief research accomplishment during his 25-year academic career. Because of its magnitude, the most recent edition not only appears in a new loose-leaf format, but includes new chapters on international climate change law, international trade law and the environment, and compliance with and enforcement of environmental laws. The new edition also brings on board co-authors and authors who have re-written or built on previous chapters. It is acknowledged as the leading textbook on the subject, not only in South Africa, but also in the region.



In Search of Equality

Edited by Stephanie Rohrs, Dee Smythe, Annie Hsieh and Monica de Souza

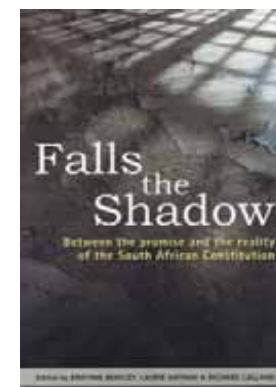
Just over 50 years ago, several African countries drew up new constitutions that included additions such as the Protocol on the Rights of Women. Decades later, has constitutional reform brought gender equality to women in Africa? And what does gender equality mean in the everyday lives of women on the continent? The contributors to this volume provide insights into women's rights in seven African countries: Cote d'Ivoire, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, and Uganda. Each looks at the causes, context, and consequences of the struggle to uphold women's rights.



Access to Information in Africa

Edited by Fatima Diallo and Richard Calland

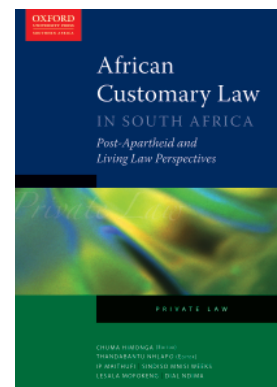
For a long time, Africa has 'lagged' behind global advances in transparency, but there are now significant developments on the continent. This text gives an African account of progress made and setbacks suffered. It also details the challenges and obstacles to policy-makers and practitioners – challenges that must be overcome if greater public access to information is to make a positive contribution to the continent's future.



Falls the Shadow

Kristina Bentley, Laurie Nathan and Richard Calland

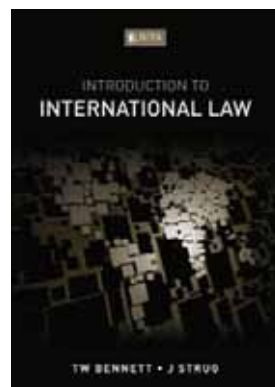
The publication takes its title from TS Eliot's *The Hollow Men*. For co-editor Laurie Nathan, these lines describe particularly the situation in which the South African Constitution promises so much, but doesn't deliver to people on the ground: "In a constitutional democracy, we purposefully constrain the powers of the state so that power cannot be abused to the detriment of the citizens, yet in South Africa it seems that the state is more and more free to do as it pleases, creating a dangerous situation for its people. Structural violence often leads to physical violence."



African Customary Law in South Africa

Dial Ndima, IP Maitshufi, Lesala Mofokeng, Sindiso Mnisi Weeks, Chuma Himonga and Thandabantu Nhlapo

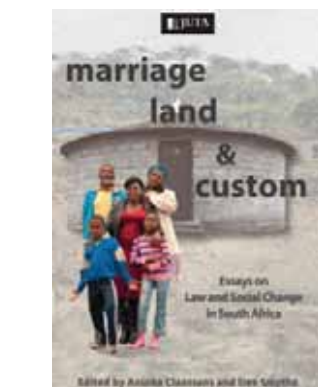
A clear introduction to indigenous law in South Africa, this text provides a structure for understanding the nature and overarching system of customary law, illustrating its distinctiveness in relation to other areas of law, and exploring the dynamic precepts and values of living customary law. The book, a useful reference for scholars and practitioners, suggests an approach that supports a harmonisation of customary law precepts and values with the common law and with Western constitutional jurisprudence, and offers an authentic, culturally sensitive framework within which contentious issues might be resolved.



An Introduction to International Law

Tom Bennett and Jonathan Strug

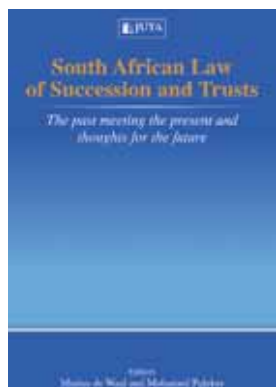
This book gives readers an overview of an ever-growing body of materials. In the past half-century, the law governing (primarily) the relationship of states has grown enormously. International and domestic treaties and cases have proliferated, and with them, reports, commentaries, textbooks and journal literature. The text includes all the traditional subject matter such as sources, treaties, law of the sea, nationality, state responsibility, diplomatic and consular immunities, the application of international law in national legal systems, and so on. But it also includes topics of recent interest: international criminal and economic law, the three generations of human rights, and international organisations.



Marriage, Land & Custom

Edited by Aninka Claessens and Dee Smythe

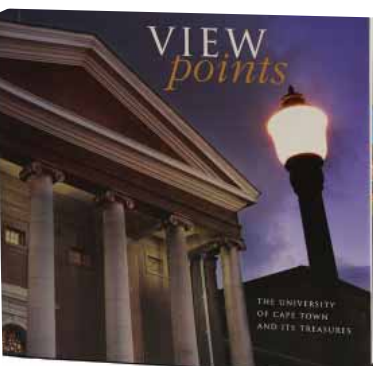
Significant processes of change are under way in South Africa in relation to marriage and the land rights of single women living in 'communal' areas. Scholars describe declining marriage rates, particularly among poor African women, and argue that this trajectory has accelerated in post-apartheid years. Single women are increasingly claiming and being allocated residential sites in 'communal areas'. This practice appears to confound the customary law premise of land rights vesting exclusively in men. The volume's contributors ask how the far-reaching processes of change relate to one another, and to broader economic and political developments, and examine the impact of the implementation of the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act.



South African Law of Succession and Trusts

Marius de Waal and Mohamed Paleker

This publication comprises papers presented at a UCT conference in 2012, where participants examined the considerable developments that have occurred in the areas of succession and trusts. The book (also published as *Acta Juridica 2014*) contains a wide array of contributions dealing with aspects of 'mainstream' succession and trust law. In keeping with the constitutional recognition of African customary law and different systems of personal law, several contributions deal with the relevance of African customary law and religious law in contemporary South Africa, and the harmonisation of divergent legal systems.



Viewpoints

Edited by Paul Weinberg

This book celebrates UCT's architecture, landscape, students, works of art, archives, famous moments and collections. Using a mixture of photographs and descriptive text, it offers a broad reflection on UCT's place in history, while at the same time considering the context of its treasures and its role in the future of education in South Africa. The book costs R385 and is available from the UCT Communication and Marketing Department.

CLASSIFIEDS

VACANT POSTS

EXECUTIVE AND ACADEMIC POSTS:

Lecturers: Quantitative Literacy, Academic Development Programme, Centre for Higher Education Development, Closing date: 20 October 2014

Lecturer: Digital Curation, Library and Information Studies Centre, Faculty of Humanities/UCT Libraries, Closing date: 20 October 2014

Lecturer: Research Data Management, Library and Information Studies Centre, Faculty of Humanities/UCT Libraries, Closing date: 20 October 2014

Lecturers: Department of Physics, Faculty of Science, Closing date: 31 October 2014

Lecturer: Industrial Sociology/Labour Studies, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities, Closing date: 31 October 2014

Dean, Faculty of Commerce, Closing date: 12 November 2014

Dean, Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, Closing date: 12 November 2014

Senior Lecturers, Department of Economics, Faculty of Commerce, Closing date: 14 November 2014

RESEARCH AND ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT POSTS (PASS):

Research Coordinator, Centre for Educational Testing for Access and Placement, Centre for Higher Education Development, Closing date: 20 October 2014

Programme Coordinator: Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program, International Academic Programme Officer, Closing date: 20 October 2014

Employee Relations Manager, Department of Human Resources, Closing date: 21 October 2014

Junior Research Fellow: Bioinformatics, Clinical Laboratory Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 22 October 2014

Recruitment and Peer Mentor: Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program, International Academic Programme Officer, Closing date: 24 October 2014

Deputy Faculty Manager, Academic Administration, Faculty of Humanities, Closing date: 27 October 2014

Research Analyst, School of Economics, Faculty of Commerce, Closing date: 29 September 2014

Small Group Facilitators, Public Health and Family Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, Closing date: 10 November 2014

ACCOMMODATION

Fully Furnish Room to rent for a single person preferably a lady. House is situated in Wittebome right opposite Wittebome station for the amount of 2000rand per month. My Name is Shireen Rinqest my work number is 021.6801076 and my cell is 0721283377

Rondebosch: Ivydene Guest House offers short and medium term stays in charming old Cape farmhouse on Jamie shuttle route, close to shops and restaurants and Main road. Visit www.ivydeneguesthouse.com Email ivydene@mweb.co.za (+27216851747)

Rondebosch: Quiet Art deco block in residential Rondebosch area has a first floor flat available, with off street parking. The flat is recently upgraded, is cosy and sunny, is suitable for single professionals or a couple and is available for R5800 per month. Call Roland 0735039308

Short-med term accommodation: Smart, spacious room in shared 2-bed sunny Observatory cottage. Ideal for visiting students/academics. Includes internet (wifi), linen & electricity etc. Close to UCT, transport, shops, bars and restaurants. See <http://tinyurl.com/obsroom>. tom.herstein@uct.ac.za

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Rondebosch: Fully-furnished bachelor granny flat Available immediately. Off-street secure parking. Garden and separate entrance. 2 min from the Rondebosch Common. R5 000 p.m. incl water and elec. neg. Please contact James at jamesuctlaw@yahoo.com or 0743185854

Rondebosch: Charming four bedroom family home to let in quiet street, with separate self-contained flat, 2 minute walk from middle campus; Garden, off street parking. Available 15 January 2014. R20 000 p.m. Exclusion of flat negotiable. Phone 083 573 5168 or email pbarron@iafrica.com

Rondebosch East: Furnished room in shared household, close to Crawford station. Off-road parking. Ideal for Short-Med term accommodation for foreign student (preferably Spanish speaking). R3000.00 pm. Contact 0832629047/0216968352

ACCOMMODATION TO RENT: Granny/bachelor flat available immediately in Rosebank

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Typist: Looking for any kind of typing needs. I'm available Mon- Fridays from 1pm onwards. Southern Suburbs areas only. Contacts 0789787378

Female Volunteers needed: A non-profit organisation that focuses on the development of young women would like to invite female students from 2nd year till post grad who are studying towards Psychology, Communication and Marketing to volunteer with their skills and knowledge in the organisation. For more information please email info@insideoutmentors.org

Mentors Needed: A non-profit organisation that focuses on the development of young women would like to invite female students who are interested in mentoring high school girls to come and share their skills and knowledge. For more information please email info@insideoutmentors.org

ELF Montessori Preschool Mowbray half day only tutoring for special needs. Open Day 18 October and 15 November. Contact Hawa Tayob 021-6858119 www.elfmontessori.co.za

Housekeeper/ nanny with integrity and good work ethic seeks employment as employer is relocating. Has worked for family for 7 years. Available to start immediately. Please call 0837005771 for more information

Housesitting: Ex-Cape Town couple and 2 young adult offspring available to house-sit from 1 December 2014 to 15 Jan 2015 or part of that time. Responsible, and great with animals. Contact Robert Schweitzer r.schweitzer@qut.edu.au

Popular WONDERBAG & HERBALIFE products can be ordered directly from your distributor on UCT campus. Free wellness assessments done by appointment. Email : healthyhealthmatters@gmail.com / 0767696832 (whatsapp only) or call 0214869011

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UCT Retirees Dinner

The Chair of Council, Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane and the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Max Price, will host a dinner for retiring staff on Thursday 13 November 2014 in the Smuts Dining Hall at 19:00 for 19:30.

Colleagues are all invited to attend the dinner to support the retirees on this very special evening.

The cost of the three-course dinner, which includes a welcome cocktail, red/white wine, will be R200.00 per person.

To obtain tickets for this prestigious event please contact Rosina Van De Rheede at 021 650 4468, or email: rosina.vanderheede@uct.ac.za

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FAREWELL TO UCT'S AMBASSADOR- AT-LARGE

Story by Helen Swingler

Known for his ability to charm a room, disarm a conflict, open doors and mend bridges, UCT's envoy of internationalisation and Afropolitanism Professor Thandabantu Nhlapo reflects on some of the most memorable moments from his time as deputy vice-chancellor.

Eight days after starting at UCT in 2004, Thandabantu Nhlapo was called out of a high-level meeting; the students resident at Liesbeeck Gardens were marching to Bremner. "So what's that got to do with me?" he asked the message-bearer.

"You're the DVC for students," came the pithy reply.

Unsure of the crowd's mood, Nhlapo and those escorting him were persuaded to take a back route to Bremner (there was some foliage involved).

"I'd never met a situation like that before. I didn't know what to do..." he remembers. "But I decided, what the heck, I speak African languages and these were mainly black students. And I'd never really been afraid of my own people."

"But I'd never seen a toyi-toyi before – I come from a different era. And they were carrying placards that amused [former DVC] Martin West; one read: 'West, look East, the black man is coming!'"

Nhlapo greeted them in isiXhosa and isiZulu, squatting on Bremner's steps. Their issues were about the delay in outfitting laboratories at the residence; they felt that because they were black, they'd been neglected.

His diplomatic skills – which had stood him in good stead while working at the South African embassy in Washington DC – helped defuse a tense situation.

"So, what are you doing tonight?" he asked.

That evening Nhlapo and a team from ICTS and Student Housing met with all the residents of Liesbeeck Gardens. Wiring up the computer labs would be difficult because of physical limitations (the railway line, which separated the residence from campus), but there were other matters they could resolve.

"All that it needed was to sit down in a non-rowdy atmosphere and explain that."

Nhlapo's willingness to talk and to see both sides has seen him home in many negotiations.

One involved an issue of *SAX Appeal* with blasphemous content. No sooner had the edition hit the streets than it elicited a backlash, a massive outcry from Christian and

other faith communities that jammed Nhlapo and the Department of Student Affairs' email accounts for weeks. Prominent donors and long-standing benefactors threatened to pull the plug on funding.

Nhlapo brokered a tense meeting between the groups. The magazine's editors were persuaded to write a public letter of unconditional apology, and bridges were mended.

"At the end of the flap, I had personally written 632 emails responding to angry people."

Now, in his office, Nhlapo is reflecting, sitting against a backdrop of photographs taken in the company of leaders: Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel. That's the diplomat.

The other side, represented by the law degree certificates, belongs to the scholar.

How does he think he'll be remembered by his colleagues?

"Friendly, approachable, humorous... that sort of thing. But in their more serious considerations, I think they see me as a calming influence."

West called Nhlapo the "Mr Cool of the team".

"I think that's probably correct," he muses. "I am genuinely unflappable; I don't like drama... my ability to non-quarrel is probably my most disarming characteristic."

What will he miss? Senate meetings? He gives a wry smile.

"Graduation. It always brings a lump to my throat. What cheers me up [during officiation] is seeing the diversity of the graduates, and the diversity in the demographic of the people in the hall."

His favourite place on campus?

"This office. I'm usually here at 04h00; I spend so much time here."

With a portfolio coupling internationalisation and Afropolitanism as its main thrust, Nhlapo believes he got the best deal in terms of strategic goals. Ever since Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price first articulated the concept in his 2008 installation address, the academic community has had to process the implications, and, in some cases, overcome some scepticism.

Nhlapo has never had any doubts.

"It's given me a great opportunity to work on the corporate mindset of UCT as a community, in convincing us that one has nothing to be afraid of in venturing into the continent. Our position behoves us [to embrace it] if we're going to place ourselves in a position of decent and constructive continental citizenship."

"The links have always been there, but Afropolitanism has allowed us to exploit the relationships more consciously, and it has a policy behind it."

Funding from the Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Fund has given birth to a host of agreements and alliances on the continent.

"We've been able to send people out to link with colleagues around Africa on projects ranging from curriculum reform to student and staff exchanges, to joint research and publications."

"That's been beautiful; I could have done the work with no salary."

What are the main challenges facing the executive team? Nhlapo approaches his answer thoughtfully.

"I get the sense that the challenge is really how to help steer a good institution in a way that preserves all that is good, while avoiding perceptions that what is good about UCT is also exclusionary, elitist and unwelcoming to everybody else from the cultures that have not been dominant cultures at UCT. It's not just about admissions, it's not just about the rankings... More concretely, it's about trying to maintain a well-run institution in the face of political and other pressures to do stuff that will compromise excellence and good governance."

And transformation?

"This is where I evangelise. It's very simple; it's transformation of a meaningful and sustainable kind. For me, that means an institutional culture that is genuinely laid-back about diversity, has no more hang-ups about difference, and is positively curious about change instead of being scared by it."

"Right now the tension is about transformation, and the danger of being stampeded into ill-considered changes is one of the challenges one faces as a member of a team of this kind."

His role models were not liberation heroes, or the glitterati in the social pages of *Drum*, but his parents – his father, "quiet, humble and laid back"; his mother, "noisy, assertive, out there, larger than life – and way ahead of her time".

"If I said something that smacked of tribalism or racism, I'd get her famous backhanded slap across my cheek."

"And then she'd sit me down and give me the 'this is how the world works' lecture. In my home there was no such thing as boy's work or girl's work."

As a result, he learnt to polish the stoep. And he cooked. He was sensitised to issues such as gender long before most.

"My mother just didn't believe there was anything to applaud in helplessness."

Former VC Dr Stuart Saunders appointed Nhlapo to a racial harassment panel with Frank Molteno while Nhlapo was still new to UCT. That was very validating, he says. At about the same time the report from a study on sexual harassment at UCT was released, occasioning Nhlapo's first scholarly article at UCT, in which he tackled the report's findings on the cultural habits of white and black students. He was incensed by the reported views of some interviewees, who claimed that ill-treatment of women was part of African culture.

"I just saw red," he recounts, adding that he should write more when angry. The feminist magazine *Agenda* quotes him on the issue to this day.

But there is a way of influencing institutional culture without alienating

people or making them defensive. When his nephew graduated LLB, Nhlapo applied for permission to hood him. It took careful negotiating and explanation around cultural diversity and the African definition of family before his request was accepted.

The future lies in his study in a bedroom at his home in Kirstenhof (the family will move from Linkoping in December). There he will return to his first love, customary law, in which he plans to continue his research.

"I'd also like to travel, to India, Japan and Las Vegas, in that order."

Las Vegas? The lure of the lurid? "That's it. I'm curious. I just want to spend a week walking the strip and reliving all the bad movies about Las Vegas that I've seen."

And there's a lot he'd like to revisit. He's keen to start a library of old movies starring Humphrey Bogart and Richard Widmark, and a collection of old BBC TV series such as *The Sandbaggers* and *Upstairs Downstairs*.

"And I must redo my textbook on Swazi customary law of marriage and divorce – I wrote that when Swaziland had no constitution."

Then there's the book that's been in his head for 20 years: how to make sense of the intersection between modern constitutions and traditional values when it comes to a country such as South Africa, where both culture and human rights are recognised by the Constitution.

The third book is what he calls his "frivolous biography".

"That's really got to be done. I would haunt you all from the grave if I died without getting to that one."

“The challenge is really how to help steer a good institution in a way that preserves all that is good, while avoiding perceptions that what is good about UCT is also exclusionary, elitist and unwelcoming to everybody else from the cultures that have not been dominant cultures at UCT.”

Thandabantu Nhlapo