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Former presidential advisor Alan Hirsch appointed to pioneering position in the UCT's Commerce Faculty

Professor Alan Hirsch, a former Chief Economist to the Presidency, has been appointed as the founding director of the newly-created Graduate School of Development Policy and Practice in the Faculty of Commerce at the University of Cape Town.

"It gives us great pleasure to welcome Alan Hirsch back to UCT. The knowledge and experience he brings to our community of academics who study and teach policy could not be exceeded by anyone else. The expectations we attach to the new Graduate School, which will be the first of its kind in Africa, are signalled by the appointment of so eminent a leader as its first Director," says UCT's Dean of Commerce, Professor Don Ross.

Professor Hirsch outlines his vision as director of the new School.

"The Vice-Chancellor, Dr Max Price, signalled his ambition to create a Kennedy School for Africa at UCT in his inaugural lecture. We are building a School to strengthen the skills, knowledge and strategic abilities of public sector policymakers and leaders in South Africa and Africa. This is an ambitious vision, but not too ambitious for UCT. This has inspired me to work on the project and to return to UCT. We have already built a small, but very strong, team to carry out our shared vision.

"Our job is to help build African leadership that can turn the continent's recent growth spurt on to a long-term sustainable and inclusive growth programme. This is why we are building a world class school for Africa, including South Africa, in Cape Town."

For Professor Hirsch, the academic appointment is something of a homecoming. He was born in Cape Town and educated in South Africa and the US, with degrees in Economics, Economic History and History from UCT, Wits and Columbia universities. He has also trained at Georgetown University and was a visiting scholar at the

Harvard Business School.

He recently helped to found the Graduate School of Development Policy and Practice at UCT, where he is a professor and the director. He is also a regular visiting professor at the Graduate School of Governance at Maastricht University and is a country director with the International Growth Centre, a think-tank based at the London School of Economics and Oxford University.

Professor Hirsch started his career as an economic history lecturer at UCT where he economic policy research director. In 1995 he joined the Department of Trade and Industry and occupied several senior positions in industry and technology policy making until joining the Policy Unit in the Presidency in 2002, as Chief Economist. He led the negotiations team for South Africa for its first World Bank loan in 1998, and led the first negotiations with the EU for a trade and development agreement, starting in 1994.

Most recently at the Presidency, he monitored and evaluated economic policy implementation, represented the Presidency at the G20, and was co-chair of the G20 Development Working Group from 2010 to 2012.

He is a member of several boards, including the Business Trust and, until recently, the Denel group board, and was chair of Denel Aviation. He is on the board of Trade and Industry Policy Strategies, a national think tank.

Prof Hirsch has published widely on trade and industrial policy issues and has written a book entitled *Season of Hope – Economic Reform under Mandela and Mbeki*.

ENDS

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