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**17 March 2018**

## **UCT Council officially announces Prof Phakeng as new Vice-Chancellor**

The University of Cape Town Council officially announced that Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng has been appointed as the new Vice-Chancellor with effect from 1 July 2018.

The Chair of Council, Mr Sipho Pityana, issued the below statement on behalf of Council following a meeting held this morning.



17 March 2018

Dear members of the campus community

It is with great pleasure that I write to inform you of the appointment of Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng as the new Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town (UCT) with effect from 1 July 2018. Professor Phakeng, who is currently the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC): Research and Internationalisation, will take over from Dr Max Price, who has been UCT's Vice-Chancellor since 2008.

The Council made the decision to appoint Professor Phakeng today following a competitive selection process. Council congratulates Professor Phakeng in reaching this milestone in her career and is encouraged by the high level of support she has received from different stakeholders during the selection process. This overwhelming confidence in her leadership is an endowment from which she will draw as she takes up this complex and yet exciting role.

The UCT Council is confident that in Professor Phakeng we have found a suitable and capable candidate who will provide academic, strategic, transformational and ethical leadership and vision for the institution. We trust her to lead and manage the institution in pursuing its 2016-2020 strategic plan, which she was involved in developing. Both in the short time that she has been with UCT and during the recruitment process she has demonstrated the required senior executive leadership experience in higher education and an understanding of the operations and affairs of a university environment. She has both an ability to exercise academic leadership as well as a successful track record of strategic management.

What also stood out about Professor Phakeng was her sound knowledge and understanding of the key challenges and opportunities arising from the changing higher education environment in South Africa and globally.

She has a good appreciation of the possibilities that this situation presents for us. Her clear understanding of UCT as an African university, its developmental role, its commitment to deepen its links within the continent, internationalism, and pioneering, as well as the need to advance divergent critical knowledge systems make her a compelling choice as Vice-Chancellor.

Professor Phakeng's appointment followed a meticulous recruitment process that involved public presentations by the shortlisted candidates to stakeholders as well as rigorous interviews. Following this process, the selection committee presented their recommendation to appoint Professor Phakeng as Vice-Chancellor to Senate, which supported the appointment. The Institutional Forum (IF) was presented with the recommendation and concluded that due process was followed, including steps taken to meet employment equity targets. The IF then submitted its own report to Council in this regard. The selection committee submitted a full report on the recruitment and selection process, together with the reports of Senate and the IF, to Council on 17 March 2018 for approval of the recommended candidate. After consideration, Council approved the appointment.

Commenting on her appointment, Professor Phakeng said:

"I am honoured to have been afforded an opportunity to lead one of the best institutions on the continent. I am particularly humbled by the overwhelming support that I have received within the university community. I know that the task that lies ahead is a mammoth one and I do not underestimate its complexities. In every challenge we face there are also opportunities. I also know that alongside all the members of the campus community, we will meet the challenges and reach even higher milestones as an institution.

"I will work tirelessly to enhance our cutting-edge research, which speaks directly to the challenges of our country, region, continent and the world. We will grow and develop talented academics, other staff and students from South Africa, elsewhere on the continent and internationally. I wish UCT to become a phenomenal international experience for our students, an experience that is profoundly embedded in academic excellence and that is uniquely African – an experience positively unforgettable. We will rethink curricula and make sure we broaden our pursuit of excellence in research, teaching and learning and in all our activities. There is a lot to do and I look forward to beginning this task."

Commenting on the appointment, current Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price said:

"I congratulate Professor Phakeng on this exciting personal and professional achievement. The role of Vice-Chancellor at UCT is an extremely demanding one but I have no doubt that Professor Phakeng has qualities that will stand her in good stead as she takes on this significant challenge. Under the leadership of Professor Phakeng, we can expect to see the university develop further and reach even greater heights. Professor Phakeng has eight years of experience as a DVC at two universities and her two years at UCT will ensure a smooth transition."

I, alongside and on behalf of the greater university community, thank Dr Price for the sterling work he has done in the past 10 years and which he continues to do in steering the university through remarkable milestones and complex moments. We will take the opportunity to thank Dr Price and to celebrate his achievements, closer to his departure at the end of June 2018.

On behalf of the entire UCT community I congratulate Professor Phakeng on her new position and wish her a productive and successful term in office. The UCT community will of course find an appropriate moment to celebrate Professor Phakeng's installation after she assumes office on 1 July 2018. We look forward to marking this moment in history as a community.

Sincerely

Mr Siphon M Pityana  
Chair of UCT Council

[Read additional background on Professor Phakeng...](#)

**ENDS**

***Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department***

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