

3 August 2020

Dear members of the leadership lekgotla,

I am writing to update you on progress made with regards to the project to:

- upgrade UCT's official web content management system (CMS) ([Phase 1](#)),
- the Web Migration Project ([Phase 2](#)) and
- the implementation of a Web Governance Working Group [WGWG] to oversee the management of the university's digital presence.

I will be tabling this item at an upcoming meeting of the leadership lekgotla but in preparation for this meeting I am sharing this update with you. Please feel free to direct any queries to myself about the project should any arise prior to the LL meeting. In February this year I wrote to you as chair of the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) about the project ([attached](#)), what follows below serves as a second update.

Despite the impact of Covid-19 on university operations, for the most part this project and its work has proceeded.

#### Project background

Most of UCT's websites are hosted in the official web content management system, Drupal 7, as per UCT web policy. The system is nearing end of life; from November 2021 security upgrades will no longer be available for it. This will render it extremely vulnerable to attack and by extension, expose all websites on it to a high level of risk. There are also ongoing performance and stability issues. All efforts must be made to decommission Drupal 7 as soon as possible.

The Drupal 8 Implementation and Website Migration Project will replace Drupal 7 with Drupal 8 ([Phase 1](#)) and migrate all Drupal 7 sites into the new system ([Phase 2](#)).

#### Web governance

The PIC and project team are working closely with the newly established WGWG. The WGWG has been tasked with drafting a UCT web governance framework including strategy, governance structures, roles and responsibilities, and web and related policies. Web governance is essential to manage UCT's web presence and make it both effective and sustainable. The WGWG reports into UICTC.

The web governance and Drupal projects need each other's support to ensure the success of both endeavours: Drupal as an enterprise web content management system is a component of web governance; the WGWG will draft the policies, standards and guidelines to govern and steer its use and manage its content, and also draft related roles and responsibilities embedded in a web governance structure.

#### Project Roll-out

As noted above the project will roll-out in two phases. Phase 1 is CMS development and Phase 2 is migration into the new CMS. Phase 1 is currently underway following the selection of a service provider to assist the project working group.

#### Prioritised migration list

For phase 2 the project team will divide websites into top, high, medium high and medium priority categories. This will make it possible to schedule their migration. The broad categories are:

1. The main university site, faculty sites and selected service sites for staff and students, e.g. [www.students.uct.ac.za](http://www.students.uct.ac.za) and [www.lib.uct.ac.za](http://www.lib.uct.ac.za)
2. Sites of administrative importance; support and service sites, e.g. [www.eresearch.uct.ac.za](http://www.eresearch.uct.ac.za) and [www.openaccess.lib.uct.ac.za](http://www.openaccess.lib.uct.ac.za)
3. Sites of academic departments and divisions; accredited research groups
4. Other research-related sites; sites for conferences, facilities, projects, programmes, conferences, unions, societies, etc.

Sites last updated in between 2015 and 2018 will not be migrated unless updated or otherwise successfully motivated for.

### Migration criteria

The project team drafted migration criteria that will determine which sites qualify for migration. The criteria are based on good web governance principles.

Sites that are out of date or have significant content, navigation/ structural issues do not qualify. Owners and content managers of such sites will be given the opportunity to address these issues by a given deadline.

Owners of sites that have very few pages and/or hardly any traction online will be encouraged to decommission their sites or move their content to parent sites if feasible.

Given the urgency to decommission Drupal 7, the tight timelines and the volume of work Phase 2 entails, the project will not be able to accommodate poor co-operation by site owners and content managers. They will be given deadlines by which to respond to project communication and requests. Failure to co-operate may result in sites being moved to the bottom of the migration list or even removed from it. The PIC's asks LL members for their support to determine with their website administrators priorities and to adhere to the moratorium and migration principles to ensure the success of this project.

### Moratorium on new sites & site completion deadline

The Request for Proposal asked for a Phase 2 cost estimate for a total of 350 websites. There are currently 326 live websites and ±60 development sites, most of whose owners will probably want to complete them. Requests are constantly coming in for new websites. The project budget can't accommodate the increasing number of sites to be migrated.

The project therefore requires the announcement of an immediate moratorium on the creation of new websites, to last until Drupal 8 becomes available to the community. In addition, a deadline must be announced for the completion of sites currently empty or under construction. This deadline should be a month after the moratorium date i.e. 1 August moratorium deadline, and by 1 September all new websites, or those under construction before the moratorium was announced need to be completed.

Those who miss the site completion deadline or are prevented from getting a new site by the moratorium will have the option to wait for Drupal 8, or to add content to existing parent sites, or to appeal for an exception to the moratorium or deadline extension. The PIC will consider these requests. Note that granting them will impact our timeline and budget.

### Budget

The project's R12.6 million budget ask was approved by RAAG in 2019 for three years. The R7.8 million intended for year one was transferred but the team was informed that due to the financial implications of COVID-19 the balance (40%) may not be available.

If this is the case, the project will not be able to proceed so it is critical for the project that clarity is given on further funding for the project in years 2 & 3. Clarity is needed urgently as Phase 2 contract negotiations and planning cannot proceed without this assurance. There are two additional budget complexities.

- The service provider's cost estimate for Phase 2 exceeds the original budget allocated by RAAG for it by R2.6 million. Contract and cost negotiations can only take place once Phase 1 determines how the site content migration tools will work. The extent of their efficiency will determine the manual effort required, the speed of migration, and may reduce this cost estimate. However it is critical that the project is transparent up front about the possible cost complexities for phase 2.
- The service provider indicated that the cost estimates have a possible variance of 20%, up or down. Coincidentally the PIC instructed that there must be a contingency amount in the budget, which does not seem possible without acquiring additional funds, especially if the budget is cut. The budget, requirements and deliverables will be managed tightly to avoid incurring additional cost.

The project team are keeping budget constraints in mind while the system specifications are being finalised, but the delivery of an efficient, improved and robust system can't be compromised.

### Concluding remarks

The success of the project rests on the support of the wider university community. Members of the PIC will make themselves available to any members of the LL should they require further clarity or communication to their various departments or faculties on the project itself or its roll-out and how it may impact their work.

Following this briefing to the LL the PIC will:

- Provide an update to the university community on the project and announce a moratorium on the development of new sites and
- engage with central finance to resolve the outstanding budget matters.

Thank you

Dr Reno Morar  
Chief Operating Officer

Chairperson of the Project Implementation Committee