



21 July 2022

UCT VC hosts sessions on using science to tackle social injustices and realise intergenerational justice

University of Cape Town Vice-Chancellor Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng will host the last two virtual sessions, under the theme “Using the science of the future to shape our present”, on 24 and 31 July.

Phakeng has hosted two fascinating sessions thus far, which covered the themes of [Quantum Revolution and Advanced AI](#), and [Human Augmentation](#). She is hosting these sessions at the invitation of the [Geneva Science Diplomacy Anticipator](#) (GESDA), a Switzerland-based ‘think and do tank’ whose mission is to anticipate, accelerate and translate into concrete actions the use of emerging science-driven topics.

The sessions serve “to deepen our understanding of how science might shape our future, and how we can use these predicted futures to shape the present. It is imperative that we as Africans ensure that the voices of Africa’s youth are part of and influence these conversations and decisions.”

She said: “Science has helped us to make sense of our changing world, and for humanity to advance. It is for these reasons, and many more, that I enthusiastically accepted the offer to serve on the GESDA board. Together with GESDA, UCT recognises that it is critical for our inclusive development that the voices of Africa’s youth are heard.”

The two remaining sessions will be livestreamed via Microsoft Teams and on UCT’s [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) platforms. The sessions will address two topics aligned with the [GESDA Science Breakthrough Radar®](#). These are [Eco-regeneration, Geoengineering & Space Resources](#) (on 24 July) and [Science & Diplomacy](#) (on 31 July). Both sessions will take place at 16:00 SAST.

“UCT’s Vision 2030 envisages all of us playing a leading role in creating a fair and just society. Through these sessions we can learn how to do so using science to tackle social injustices and to realise intergenerational justice. By engaging with global and local thought-leaders, and together with GESDA we are working to make the intangible tangible, the unknown known, and the misunderstood understood,” said Phakeng.

On 24 July, Phakeng will be joined by Dr [Adriana Marais](#), Dr [Christopher Trisos](#) and Dr [Romaric Odoulami](#). Marais is a technologist and internationally renowned advocate for

off-world exploration, Trisos is director of the [Climate Risk Lab](#) at UCT's [African Climate and Development Initiative](#) (ACDI), and Odoulami is a junior researcher at UCT's ACDI.

There is also a competition, with the criteria to be announced after the four sessions. Young people (30 years old or younger) will be invited to submit their ideas on how they can use the science of the future to shape our present, based on any of the topics covered in the sessions.

The prize is an all-expenses paid trip to attend the [GESDA Summit 2022](#), a global summit of thought leaders to take place in Geneva from 12 to 14 October 2022. The summit will bring together academics, politicians, diplomats, executives, and investors from around the world to participate in a series of plenary and parallel sessions of rich and engaged discussions.

- [Read the full communication by Professor Phakeng.](#)

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