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March graduation season adds more lustre to UCT

The March 2023 graduation season does not only give the University of Cape Town (UCT) more reason to celebrate, but it also illuminates what has been a challenging past few months for the institution that is perched first in Africa on all five major university rankings.

This is according to the UCT Chair of Council, Ms Babalwa Ngonyama, who delivered a brief address on Monday, 27 March 2023 at the first of the 15 graduation ceremonies to be held this week.

"I am here to join members of the UCT executive and Senate in witnessing a moment of immense pride and promise. And to congratulate you all on your proud accomplishments. It is a time of celebration and jubilation, in recognition of thousands of the graduands who have in more ways than one defied the odds to reach the finish line. It is no small achievement to complete a programme of study at UCT," she said.

- [Read the full address by Ms Ngonyama.](#)
- [Watch the address by Ms Ngonyama.](#)

Ngonyama acknowledged that this graduation season came "at the point where our university is beginning to reach what one can perhaps describe as the proverbial 'light at the end of the tunnel' moment".

"Most of you who hold our beloved university so dearly to their hearts would be aware of the turbulent path we have had to navigate in the latter part of 2022 and the first few months of this year.

"I am however grateful that we are at a point where most of these challenges have now been addressed, and others are in the process of being addressed. We have increasingly started seeing strong signs that our university is emerging strong out of this period," said Ngonyama.

Sharing nuggets of wisdom with the graduates who are among the over 5 200 – including more than 50 PhDs – to be capped during the March graduation season, Ngonyama reminded the congregation that as much as life has seasons, it was one's ability to navigate these that set them apart.

"There is no growth in 'soft life'. Even in your own spaces post this momentous occasion, you will encounter challenges from time to time. It is how you respond to life challenges that matters."

She added: "Graduation is a time of elation and ecstasy. It is the fruition of our Vision 2030, we unleash potential to create a fair and just society. We develop leaders and critical thinkers, individuals who will create ripples in their communities and in so doing create a better future for all, people who will take on the problems of this world and leave it a better place.

"You are following in the footsteps of Nobel Prize recipients and others who have achieved high honours and recognition. Trailblazers of the industry, business and government, innovators, explorers and thought leaders across all our academic disciplines."

She urged graduates to use their qualifications to help alleviate poverty, unemployment and inequality.

The event marked the commencement of UCT's 15 graduation ceremonies scheduled to take place till Friday, 31 March 2023 at Sarah Baartman Hall.

The university will also award honorary doctorates to two distinguished individuals: Dr Debra Roberts and Her Excellency ꞆXuu Katrina Esau.

Dr Roberts, who will be honoured during the Faculty of Science ceremony on Tuesday, 28 March at 18:00, is head of the Sustainable and Resilient City Initiatives Unit in eThekweni Municipality and has been at the forefront of climate change action and research over the last 20 years in South Africa, Africa and globally.

Her Excellency ꞆXuu Katrina Esau will receive her honorary doctorate during the Faculty of Humanities ceremony on Wednesday, 29 March at 14:00. She is highly commended for her contribution towards language studies and her mission to preserve the endangered culture of the San people.

All the ceremonies will also be streamed live on the [UCT news website](#) as well as through the university's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.

- [Download the full ceremony schedule.](#)
- [Read more about graduation.](#)

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