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UCT aims to address plight of student facing fee debt

The University of Cape Town (UCT) will host its inaugural [UCT Day](#) on Friday, 6 October 2023 with the noble intention of alleviating the plight of students facing fee debt, which affects almost half of the student population.

The latest confirmed first-year UCT students figures indicate that in 2021, 38% were on NSFAS funding; almost 48% came from households with a high disadvantage rating; and close to 50% were the first in their family to attend university.

Beyond the university's planned celebrations, UCT Day is also about raising funds towards four [four student support initiatives](#), with the other three being anti gender-based violence programmes, the student wellness service and the UCT food sovereignty programme which aims to address food insecurity on campus.

UCT Vice-Chancellor (interim) Emeritus Professor Daya Reddy said: "Our inaugural UCT Day, which will take place during UCT's birthday month, is all about celebrating the essence of who we are, and the spirit of excellence and innovation that pervades our various activities."

UCT Day is an opportunity for alumni, staff and students to demonstrate collective commitment to the institution's fundraising efforts. Whether big or small, once-off or recurring, each contribution matters – from as little as R200.

The Development and Alumni Department will run an eight-hour phonathon on the day, calling alumni and friends to pledge their support. Members of the public can also make an [online donation](#) to any of the four student fundraising causes and, in so doing, help UCT deliver on its vision of excellence, transformation and sustainability.

Many UCT students struggle to fund their studies. While undergraduate students from households earning a combined maximum income of R350 000 a year qualify for NSFAS funding, this is often not enough.

Each year, UCT has a number of students whose outstanding fees vary between R1 000 and R150 000.

Thembeke Nkomo, UCT's student bursaries coordinator, explained: "It is very difficult for students to attend classes not knowing whether their fees will be paid. At UCT we fundraise for these kinds of challenges where students are unable to graduate or to register because they have debt."

On Friday, 6 October, the day will also be about celebrations and activities on upper campus and beyond. Various alumni events have been planned in UCT's four main regions, to coincide with celebrations on campus. In Cape Town, the hub of activity will be on UCT's Upper Campus.

Events start at 12:00 and include live music by UCT Radio; a Zumba session at 12:00; the much-anticipated UCT executive challenge at 15:30, featuring members of the senior leadership team who will compete in a relay race; wheelchair rugby; and an outdoor movie experience hosted by Sunshine Cinema from 18:00 to 20:00.

UCT Day also features three sports challenges in which teams, drawn from across the university, will compete against each other. These are five-a-side soccer; 5km walkathon; and the UCT Amazing Race powered by BMW.

There will also be the UCT Libraries Tours on 6 October at 12:00, 13:00 and 14:00 (Jagger Library and Birkdale House); and the UCT Campus Sustainability Guided Walking Tours on 5 and 6 October from 12:00 to 13:30.

- [Visit the UCT Day events page for the full schedule of exciting activities.](#)

The UCT community will come together to show their support for UCT students by dressing in UCT colours, posting videos and photos on social media and amplifying the call to support the four student fundraising initiatives.

- [Visit the UCT Day website.](#)
- [Support the UCT Day student fundraising initiatives.](#)
- [Watch the UCT Day project videos.](#)

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