



Communication and Marketing Department  
Isebe loThungelwano neNtengiso  
Kommunikasie en Bemerkingsdepartement

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa  
Welgelegen House, Chapel Road Extension, Rosebank, Cape Town  
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 5427/5428/5674 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 5628

[www.uct.ac.za](http://www.uct.ac.za)

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## UCT increases students' access to primary healthcare through launch of pharmacy on campus



UCT's pharmacy is located in the Ivan Toms Building.

Photo: Lerato Maduna/UCT

The University of Cape Town's (UCT) Department of Student Affairs (DSA) recently launched a Student Wellness Pharmacy aimed at not only improving how students interact with the campus-based healthcare services provided to them but also to enhance their student experience.

Housed at the Student Wellness Clinic in the Ivan Toms Building, the student-centred pharmacy will increase students' access to primary healthcare medication and preventive care on campus. This is the first time UCT has a licensed retail pharmacy on campus that is available to support student needs.

Dr Memory Muturiki, the director of Student Wellness Service (SWS), said: "As a division of the DSA, the SWS pharmacy means access to primary healthcare will be increased because SWS was previously limited in the kind of medication they could offer students."

She added: "Our pharmacy is student-centred; a lot of what we offer is geared towards them. We are also open to suggestions from students on how they want the pharmacy to be. In future, we are also looking at different ways of providing our services after hours, through pharma e-lockers."

"The bigger picture is also about strengthening the mental well-being of our students. It is about supporting student success and UCT's [Vision 2030](#), as well as financial sustainability to make it affordable for us to bring in more medication on campus."

For medical services manager at SWS, clinician Dr Nandipha Qangule, a lot of the work included the medical consumables part of the job: ordering medication and taking charge of the medical room, which meant resources were being split thinly across the board.

"When the department decided to create a pharmacy and get a pharmacist to support the clinical team, it was a huge load off our backs that we were responsible for. One can now walk in and get medication as they normally would at any other pharmacy and not go through a consultation first, freeing up space for someone else who might need the consultation."

"Also, a pharmacist will give you advice on whether you do need to be seen by a clinician on site and that's another advantage," said Qangule.

A handful of students provided feedback of their experiences with SWS, giving staff glowing reviews on their professionalism, compassion, and wisdom during consultations.

DSA Executive Director Pura Mgolombane said the launch of the pharmacy was a tangible demonstration of what the department envisages for students.

"This is an important occasion from a DSA perspective because when we speak about the liberation of students, this is what we mean. Students have been clear in how the pharmacy liberates them and how they are receiving their medication."

"In a bigger context, I want to re-emphasise the point around how at the DSA we speak about liberating the soul – not only for its own sake, but for student well-being. And that leads to academic success. We are very intentional in building blocks towards student wellbeing and student success," said Mgolombane.

*Story by Kamva Somdyala, UCT News*

**ENDS**

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

**Ridovhona Mbulaheni**

Media Liaison and Monitoring Officer  
Communication and Marketing Department  
University of Cape Town  
Rondebosch  
Tel: (021) 650 2333  
Cell: (064) 905 3807  
Email: [ridovhona.mbulaheni@uct.ac.za](mailto:ridovhona.mbulaheni@uct.ac.za)  
Website: [www.uct.ac.za](http://www.uct.ac.za)