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UCT celebrates exceptional educators with highest accolade

Teaching and learning are the core tenets of a university and in order to ensure that students receive the best education possible, there must be exceptional educators that go above and beyond. The University of Cape Town (UCT) acknowledges the primary place of teaching and learning in the university's work through the annual [Distinguished Teacher Award](#) (DTA). It is the highest accolade awarded to teaching staff at all levels within the university and recognises excellent teaching.

Winners of the 2019 DTA at UCT include Associate Professor Amrita Pande of the Department of Sociology, Professor Andrew Argent of the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, Associate Professor Romy Parker of the Department of Anaesthesia: Pain Management, and Dr Tessa Dowling of the Department of African Languages and Literatures.

[Associate Professor Amrita Pande](#)



Photo: Je'nine May/UCT

A sought-after supervisor, an active researcher and a highly skilled teacher; a leader on administrative matters in the Faculty of Humanities and the co-head of the Department of Sociology; a mother of two, juggling remote teaching while homeschooling her children during lockdown – these are just some of the many roles of Associate Professor Amrita Pande. She is currently working on two related projects: a monograph on global fertility flows of eggs, sperms, embryos and wombs connecting the world in unexpected ways, and an edited volume that analyses the world of selective reproduction – the politics of who gets to legitimately reproduce the future – through a comparative analysis of three modes of controlling birth, namely contraception, reproductive violence, and assisted reproductive technologies. "What I enjoy most about teaching is the drama, the unexpected and the joy of everyday classroom interactions."

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Professor Andrew Argent



Photo: Supplied

home away from home. "I love finding honest ways of understanding and explaining the clinical signs I see in patients to my students. I am fascinated by the work I have been privileged to do and find it incredibly exciting when others share that fascination."

In a career that spans almost 42 years, Professor Andrew Argent, the head of paediatrics and child health at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital, remains inspired by those who manage to achieve "remarkable things" despite the countless odds stacked against them. Added to that, he is inspired by his students, who ask the difficult questions, and his colleagues, who "keep on caring, who keep on giving and endlessly seek the best for their patients". The Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital is UCT's paediatric teaching hospital. For Argent, it is his

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Associate Professor Romy Parker



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After working as a physiotherapist with specialist expertise in pain and pain management in South Africa, the United Kingdom and United States for several years, UCT's Associate Professor Romy Parker decided to return to South Africa. She became a teacher because she wanted to make a difference and extend her range of impact. She is also responsible for the UCT pain management team in the Department of Anaesthesia and Perioperative Medicine, where she leads the pain research cluster and works as a clinician one day a week at the Chronic Pain Management Clinic at Groote Schuur Hospital. "I have always believed that it is important to my role as a teacher to continue to practise, particularly in my niche in pain management. Working as a clinician means I am always in touch with the clinical context and am able to bring current experiences into the classroom to contextualise learning for students and to build veracity."

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[Dr Tessa Dowling](#)



Photo: Je'nine May/UCT

Dr Tessa Dowling recently met some of her Xhosa Communication students on Muizenberg beach for a lesson. They were *that* keen to continue speaking and practising in the semester break. As they shared their associations with the ocean, Dowling was able to teach them a new, personal vocabulary about the sea. "Language is the star of the show. Having English speakers learning African languages shifts the balance of power. You will feel stupid when you learn a new language. And that is right and just. When I have

students who couldn't speak a word of Xhosa three years ago and now conduct their research in Xhosa, I think we are going some way towards being inclusive."

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