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UCT and provincial health department sign bilateral agreement

The University of Cape Town's (UCT) Faculty of Health Sciences and the Western Cape Department of Health recently signed a bilateral agreement for training and collaboration.

Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Associate Professor Lionel Green-Thompson, commented: "The agreement governs the relationship between the two in relation to their shared mandate of education, research and service. The clinical platform, which is managed by the Western Cape Government, is an environment in which patient care is central."

The agreement also forms the basis for shared responsibilities through joint staff appointments for teaching health sciences students across the province, conducting relevant research and enhancing patient care and service delivery.

Dr Keith Cloete, head of the Western Cape Department of Health, remarked on the relatively new teams in place in both the faculty and province, which provided a "clean slate" from which to build.

"It's a good place for a new team to start. There's value in a new set of people starting a new journey. And we thank those who have gone before."

The partnership includes training and service at the main teaching hospitals of Groote Schuur Hospital and the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital. The agreement also facilitates education, research and service at secondary and district hospitals and primary healthcare facilities in the Metro, West Coast and Garden Route districts. The Western Cape Department of Health works very closely with the faculty to support its academic activities, with high-quality service delivery to patients being a priority.

The complex agreement involved a lengthy negotiation process between UCT and the provincial health department, overseen initially by Dr Reno Morar, the former deputy dean for health services and now UCT's chief operating officer, and more recently by his successor, Dr Tracey Naledi, the new deputy dean for health services.

Green-Thompson said: "The engagement at the Groote Schuur Hospital nexus with joint appointments in the different departments with the province and others has been exceptional. And as we've engaged with bringing students back, I've been struck at the level of engagement with provincial officials."

Green-Thompson added that the bilateral agreement represented a “real partnership”, based on mutual respect and commitment to service that extended beyond an exchange of resources.

Naledi alluded to the larger challenges facing the country’s health system. She said that COVID-19 had shown what could be achieved by working collectively towards common goals embodied in practice.



Strengthening relations (clockwise from left) Dr Tracey Naledi, Dr Kerrin Begg, Associate Prof Lis Lange, Associate Prof Lionel Green-Thompson, Royston Pillay and Dr Keith Cloete.

Photo: Lerato Maduna/UCT

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