

FAREWELL TO DR MAX PRICE

UCT Vice-Chancellor 2008–2018





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TEN YEARS IN OFFICE

It is not possible in the space of a few hundred words to do justice to a decade of activity and progress at an institution as large and complex as the University of Cape Town (UCT). What follows is a reminder of just some of the highlights at the university and the overall transformation of the institution since Dr Max Price took over the reins as Vice-Chancellor in July 2008.

“THAT IS THE AIM OF UCT: TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD WE LIVE IN, AND TO DEVELOP GRADUATES WHO WILL MAKE THIS KIND OF TRANSFORMING DIFFERENCE WHEREVER THEY GO.”



SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS

UCT's student body has grown significantly to meet the imperative for greater access to higher education. A new financial aid system was implemented to ensure that if a student is academically eligible to study at UCT, they are not turned away on financial grounds.

Allocations to interventions that improve success rates have also been increased substantially. Some of these university-wide interventions are the First Year Experience, the provision of laptops to all first-years on financial aid (funded largely from the Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Fund), the expansion of departmental Academic Development Programmes, and the Multilingual Education Project.

Since 2008 the institution has grown from 24 000 to 29 000 students. This reflects a

10% increase in undergraduates and a 66% increase in postgraduates. This includes an increase of 46% in black undergraduates, and an extraordinary increase of 131% in black postgraduates over the past decade.

There has been significant progress in addressing shortages in student accommodation. The Obz Square residence alone made an additional 880 beds available, while some smaller apartment blocks were acquired by UCT and renovated. This means that approximately 6 800 students can be accommodated in the university's residence system.

Over the past ten years, UCT has produced 66 000 well-educated graduates whose independent mindsets and commitment to social justice issues have seen them playing a transformational role in nation-building and making a difference in their personal and professional lives.



ADDRESSING ACTIVISM

Over the past three years, UCT has weathered the storms of challenging, often traumatic student and labour protests, which were part of a national protest movement. The central issue of student protests has been the demand for fee-free education, which remains beyond the control of individual vice-chancellors. However, the continuing post-apartheid colonial imprint within South Africa's universities continues to be intensely controversial, and demands more concerted attention to ensure appropriate redress.



A key outcome of these protests at UCT was the insourcing of some 1 300 workers, who had been outsourced in the 1990s, in the interests of better conditions of employment and a more integrated, cohesive and humane workplace.

Further protests paralleled similar student movements around the world relating to identity politics, LGBTQIA+ rights and recognition, gender-based violence, and issues of disability and mental health. Student well-being remains a top priority and, as such, UCT has continually improved its systems for addressing the mental and physical health of its students.



ADVANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING

In order to elevate the status of teaching, and raise the commitment to, and quality of, teaching at the institution, UCT reviewed and amended its ad hominem promotion criteria and continued to recognise outstanding teachers through local and national awards.

The university responded to advances in digital learning technologies by piloting online qualifications and designing and delivering the first MOOCs (massive open online courses) at a South African university. The 'flipped' classroom (lectures are delivered online and face-to-face time is used for tutorials) was also introduced, giving students 24/7 access to teaching for review.

In 2016 UCT was ranked by Class Central as the second best institution globally for creating MOOCs. Four new MOOCs were introduced in 2017, bringing the total up to 12, with over 185 000 learners from 180 countries participating in these online courses.





A RESEARCH-INTENSIVE UNIVERSITY

UCT has moved from being ‘research-led’ to being ‘research-intensive’ through the development of research management systems, training and support for emerging researchers, and policy and projects that promote open access and discoverability. Financial and organisational investment in postdoctoral programmes, the growth in both the numbers and quality of postgraduates, and the creation of interdisciplinary programmes have also been invaluable to this change.

The impact of this changing focus can be seen in the research results and awards achieved by UCT’s students and academics:

UCT’s publication count has increased by 85% over the past ten years, and the number of papers co-authored with international academics has more than doubled since 2008.

One-third of the country’s National Research Foundation (NRF) A-rated researchers, who are international leaders in their fields, call UCT home. This makes up



41 of the total of 542 NRF-rated scholars at the institution.

The main goals of the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) are to attract and retain excellence in research and innovation at South African universities through the establishment of research chairs. A total of 42 (20%) of the country's SARChI chairs are held by researchers at UCT.

UCT is home to two Department of Science and Technology (DST) / NRF Centres of Excellence:

- Centre of Excellence in Birds as Key to Biodiversity Conservation
Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology
- Centre of Excellence in Catalysis
c*change
Centre for Catalysis Research

The Vice-Chancellor's tenure has come to an end with a Research Strategy (2015–2025) firmly in place, which commits the university to continuing to develop capacity to support researchers at every level.



GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

UCT's position as a globally competitive research university has been enhanced through internationalisation strategies that have seen the development of new institutional linkages and research collaborations. Taking advantage of its geographical location and position as a leading university in Africa, UCT plays a vital role in connecting institutions in the global north with its extensive research collaborations across Africa. This allows the university to draw international expertise to the continent, to strengthen collaborations within the continent, and to ensure that an African voice is present in global debates.

To further these ends, UCT is a member of many important international research networks, including:

- The African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA)



“THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN ... HAS A VISION OF BUILDING A BETTER AFRICA. THIS MUST BE TACKLED BOTH INTELLECTUALLY AND IN PRACTICE, AND UCT HAS DEDICATED ITSELF TO BOTH.”



- The International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU)
- The Worldwide Universities Network (WUN)
- The Southern African–Nordic Centre (SANORD)
- The Australia–Africa Universities Network (AAUN)

There has also been a concerted focus on developing UCT's networks and partnerships on the African continent as one way to differentiate itself among the top universities globally, conceptualised as a vision to be an 'Afropolitan' university.

The Graduate School of Development Policy and Practice was established in order to raise the university's profile with senior public administration officials in South Africa and across the continent through its training programmes, thematic policy workshops, and fellowships.



BUILDING UP THE CAMPUS

With an overall increase in the size of the student body and parallel improvements in teaching technologies, the university has seen related growth in campus infrastructure. Information and Communication Technology Services and Research administration, for example, moved into buildings acquired in Main Road, Mowbray, to make more space available on campus.

New buildings include the Obz Square residence; the 400-seat New Lecture Theatre, the New Engineering Building, the new Snape learning centres, the New Economics Building, the Masingene building for student administration and the International Academic Programmes Office (IAPO), and a new space for Psychology in the PD Hahn building.

An academic conference centre at the Graduate School of Business is currently under construction, and the refurbishment and redevelopment of the Neuroscience Centre at Groote Schuur Hospital, to house UCT's Neuroscience Institute, will be completed in 2019. The university has also committed to a new building for the School of Education and the Hasso Plattner Institute for Design Thinking (or d-school), a sister institute to two other d-schools at Stanford and Potsdam universities.

The Classroom Renewal Project delivered major improvements to over 100 classrooms' physical facilities, audiovisual and IT capability, lecture recording and customer support. Accessibility also played a role, with hearing-impaired students benefitting from the induction loop technology in 37 of the larger classrooms.





THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

One of the Vice-Chancellor's most successful transformation achievements can be seen through the work and impact of the four university-wide transdisciplinary research and advocacy initiatives that he established when he first came to UCT:

- Poverty and Inequality Initiative
- Safety and Violence Initiative
- Schools Improvement Initiative
- African Climate and Development Initiative

Commonly referred to as the Vice-Chancellor's Strategic Initiatives, these research programmes address critical challenges that are shaping South Africa's future and will leave a lasting legacy.

FUNDING THE FUTURE

Without the generous support of foundations, trusts, corporates and individual sponsors, UCT would not be able to offer its students the exceptional financial support that it does, nor would it be able to fulfil its many obligations to the institution and the community.

The university's fundraising achieved record levels, thanks to the Development and Alumni Department, with approximately R3 billion being raised since 2008. The university's bequest programme has increased from fewer than 30 bequest commitments to over 250.

Underpinned by the university's Strategic Planning Framework 2016–20, the Distinguishing UCT fundraising campaign aims to advance excellence, invest in talent and realise transformation. The primary financial goal of the campaign is to grow the value of the university's endowment fund from R500 million to R1 billion by 2019.





SOCIALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOLARSHIP

Over the past ten years UCT's commitment to engaged scholarship, or socially responsive scholarship, has been strengthened through the revision of policy, the introduction of an annual report and the establishment of the Social Responsiveness Awards.

The introduction of the Knowledge Co-op programme, which allows postgraduates to undertake research for community-based projects, has resulted in collaborations that meet research needs while providing practical support to local communities. Among other initiatives, the institution of UCT Plus, which offers formal recognition of social responsiveness activities on a student's degree transcript, and the Global Citizenship Programme, an optional

course covering global issues and social justice available to all students, have also contributed to strengthening the university's focus on social responsiveness.

Expanding its efforts to improve access from disadvantaged communities, UCT created an outreach programme in local schools. The 100UP programme, which operates in all 20 secondary schools in Khayelitsha and 11 secondary schools in Mitchells Plain, prepares matriculants for entry into university. Since the inception of 100UP in 2011, over 1 000 learners have participated in the programme, with 851 (or 88%) having gone on to study at university, with 446 of those studying at UCT.



A FINAL FAREWELL

As we wish the Vice-Chancellor farewell, we acknowledge his dedication to social justice, his courage and energy, and his tenacity and commitment to keep talking to find solutions in times of crisis. We give heartfelt thanks for his unwavering determination to improve UCT for students, for staff, and to ensure that their work positively impacts on society.

We extend our best wishes to Dr Price and his wife, Professor Deborah Posel, the founding director of the Institute of Humanities in Africa (HUMA). The commitment they have both shown towards UCT over the past decade, especially through what has been a historic, complex and difficult period in the last three years, has been extraordinary. Their legacy will serve UCT for generations to come.



“AS I TAKE LEAVE OF THIS MOST CHALLENGING AND INTERESTING JOB, I AM ENCOURAGED BY UCT’S PROGRESS IN EDUCATING OUTSTANDING STUDENTS, IN PROGRESS WE HAVE ACHIEVED IN CHANGING THE DEMOGRAPHY OF THE STUDENT BODY AND IN THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS OUR ALUMNI ARE MAKING IN EVERY SECTOR, BOTH AT HOME AND AROUND THE WORLD.”



“Reflecting on the university’s achievements is an opportunity for me to pay tribute to the inspired leadership seen at many levels throughout UCT, our governing bodies, and to all the staff, students and stakeholders who have celebrated the exhilarating highs and grappled with the stressful lows.”

DR MAX PRICE



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