



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Alumni Association AGM

Minutes of the meeting held at 18h00 on Wednesday, 19 February 2020

Kramer LT1, Middle Campus, UCT

UCT Management Present:

Vice-Chancellor, Prof Mamokgethi Phakeng
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Prof Loretta Feris
Registrar, Mr. Royston Pillay
Executive Director DAD, Dr Russell Ally

Note: The meeting was quorate, 2 members of the AAB were in attendance as well as general alumni.

Welcome from the Chairperson of the Alumni Advisory Board:

Dianna Yach opened the Annual General Meeting, welcoming all attendees to the meeting. Dianna welcomed UCT Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng, UCT Registrar, Mr Royston Pillay and other members of the UCT staff present. She welcomed Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Loretta Feris who would be the keynote speaker at the meeting and informed attendees that due to time constraints, all questions following Professor Feris's address could be directed to the alumni office email or to the chair of the AAB. Dianna then invited UCT Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng to make opening remarks.

Welcome by UCT Vice-Chancellor:

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof Mamokgethi Phakeng welcomed everyone and thanked the Chair of the Alumni Advisory Board (AAB), Ms Dianna Yach and the rest of the board members for their good work. Professor Phakeng expressed gratitude to Dianna Yach for her work serving in a voluntary capacity, as Chairperson of the Alumni Advisory Board and, for her role serving on UCT Council. The Vice-Chancellor (VC) reiterated that the alumni are an important constituency of the university. She said that UCT is very fortunate to have alumni who are so involved and engaged in the business of the university. Some represent the alumni in decision-making bodies at the university.

The VC informed all attendees that 2019 had ended on a high note despite the many challenges that the university had faced. In 2019, the University experienced the brutal murder of Uyinene Mrwetyana and thereafter about 4 deaths of students, in one faculty. The VC stated that it August and September had been particularly difficult but that the university had ended the year well despite that disappointment. 2019 ended it with the University leading Africa in all 5 major international rankings. The VC stated that this is a good place to end because our focus is to do excellent work in our core business, which is the academic work and everything else that supports it. It is because of this focus on the academic work that we end up on the international rankings.

The VC stated that in 2020, the university started the year very well as well. Orientation went exceptionally well. The VC informed everyone that close to one thousand parents attended the three sessions of Parent Orientation. The sessions were live-streamed for those parents who were not able

to attend the event on campus and in addition, a link to the VC's speech was sent to those who could not view the live-streaming. The VC stated that 2020 enrolment figures looked healthy as well. She thanked the Registrar and Faculties for their good work in enrolments and admissions and informed attendees that the faculties of Science, in Health Sciences and Humanities were over enrolled. The VC stated that the Faculty of Science is the most over-enrolled which she said was a nice problem to have. To have more students than anticipated in faculties of scarce skills. The VC said that higher education is not a peace at the moment in South Africa and that there has been unrest across the sector. She said that the leadership of the university paid close attention to challenges experienced on other campuses, because they appreciate that it is only a matter of time before some of these same challenges will affect UCT also. That is why the UCT leadership work closely with other institutions to find solutions to the challenges.

The VC reiterated that the University is in good health because of the support of the alumni. She also appealed to alumni to continue in their support of UCT's Food Security programme which she said enjoyed strong support from the alumni. This year, thanks to Professor Feris and her team, UCT has changed the way this programme is managed. Students who qualify for assistance will receive vouchers which they will use at UCT Food and Connect outlets to buy their food.

The VC concluded by thanking alumni for supporting UCT, for keeping in contact with the University and for giving UCT a good name through the work the alumni do and through who they are in society.

Register and Apologies:

The Minutes of the AGM held on the 20 February 2019 were approved.
No apologies were noted.

Dianna Yach thanked the VC for her address and invited Professor Loretta Feris to the podium.

Presentation by Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Loretta Feris:

Professor Feris thanked the Chair of the Alumni Advisory Board for inviting her to speak to alumni who attended the AGM. Professor Feris mentioned that had previously addressed the Alumni Advisory Board who had requested that she give a similar address to alumni at the AGM. She apologised for not being able to stay for a Q&A session following her speech as UCT is hosting another event.

Realising the vision:

Professor Feris spoke about 'Realising the Vision' for transformation for 2020, which she said is an ongoing vision for the University. Professor Feris said that people often asked what the university means by Transformation. She said that Transformation means looking at the ethos and identity of the University and asking ourselves, 'Is this a University where everyone feels a sense of belonging?', She said that this therefore means we don't just have to look at the numbers and profiles demographics, we have to look at the place and space that we inhabit reflects the multiplicity of cultures that we are in this country and the extent of the relationships we have with each other. Is there discrimination? Is there harassment? Professor Feris said that these are among the multiple issues that her office addresses in the work of transformation. She said that the work of Transformation at the University was an ongoing endeavour and that every year, her office produces a report on what is being done. The discussion provides highlights of these activities.

Transformation as part of the core business of the university:

Professor Feris said that she wanted to start by emphasising transformation is not viewed as separate to the business of the university, which is teaching, research and social responsiveness. She said that therefore, transformation must be part of every aspect of the core business of the University. It cannot be an additional thing that we think about maybe when we have time. She said that UCT has a framework for transformation where we work across 6 different areas. She said it was important that the space and place that we are in reflect the multiplicity of cultures, languages and identities that we have. Professor Feris said that everyone should be able to see themselves reflected in the university. She said it not only about recruiting staff that reflect the South African demographic but it also about ensuring that they are supported and that they succeed. She said it's about having students who similarly represent the South African demographics and ensuring that they have a student experience that will enable them to succeed and become alumni with successful careers one day. This means UCT needs to ensure an inclusive teaching and learning environment, including an engaged focus on our research. That is the context within which her office works.

Developments in the last 3 years:

Professor Feris discussed several areas where UCT have been making progress in, in the last 3 years:

1. Increasingly, UCT has a diverse student population. She said that at UCT, we want them to have a student experience that allows them to focus on their academics. When students struggle for funding or are stressed about accommodation or food, this effects not only their experience of UCT butt also their ability to succeed and so a lot of the work that has been done over the last couple of year has been to ensure this.
2. Financial Aid: R1.2 billion was made available for student financial aid. Those students who do not have the ability to pay fees are supported. Whether it is through linking them up to NSFAS or through UCT own budgets, we provide funding for funding for both undergraduate and postgraduate students as well as for the so called 'missing middle students, those whose family income is between R350 and R600 thousand per year.
3. Student accommodation: in 2017 in particular, UCT realised that if we want to address the crisis in student accommodation that led to the student protests in 2016, we need to make a plan. One of the plans the university made was to lease accommodation off-campus Professor Feris said that the university is not able to build many residences however that UCT is currently building its last residence. She said that one of reasons UCT is not able to build more residences is because securing land in Cape Town is problematic. Working with private developers, UCT has been able to secure extra bed space so that we don't have to be in a situation where
4. Student Mental Health: Professor Feris said that this problem is not unique to UCT. It is the subject of discussions with many institutions. Increasingly students present with severe mental health problems. In 2017, a new mental health policy was adopted. 28 thousand students requiring support could no longer be serviced by four psychologists. So UCT established a primary health care system on campus. Instead of having expensive services, UCT now has social workers, psychologists and psychiatric nurses available to students. There is also a new focus on advocacy: support groups and a buddy system. Just changing or approach is making a difference
5. Food Security: Professor Feris said that last year UCT had 600 students signing up for the programme. This year, 1,500 students signed up. This speaks to the magnitude of the problem we have. It costs R32 to sponsor one student for one a meal a day. Alumni often ask 'How can we support? This is one programme where alumni can make a difference.
6. Staff: There is a focus on recruitment, development and the next generation of academics and a focus on high-performing staff. Professor Feris highlighted two additional programmes:
 - a. Next generation professorship: mid-career professionals who are supported through retreats and mentorship in order to enable their promotion. Professor Feris shared some statistics indicating progress.

- b. Gender Based Violence: Professor Feris said that GBV was a cross-cutting issue and a significant problem on all campuses. It is a problem among students and staff, sexual harassment in particular. Following the tragedy of losing a student last year, a cross-functional task team on sexual and gender-based violence was established at UCT, to ensure that campus is a safer space. She said that UCT has put safety as a prime consideration for all of our students. This includes programmes to educate in particular males such as a programme on masculinity. In addition, a specialised tribunal looking at sexual GBV has been established. This is the first one across all of the universities in South Africa. She said that UCT has been able to deal with some of the backlogs and are addressing the cases that come through the system.

On the Institutional, Restitution and Transformation Committee report (IRTC):

Professor Loretta Feris reminded the audience that the IRTC emanated from the student protests and the agreement between management and students to have a commission that is going to look at what drove the protests of 2014 and 2015 and even in the years beyond that. 2017 was about establishing terms of reference and finally agreeing with multiple stakeholders. The commission conducted the bulk of the work was conducted in 2018. It wanted to understand what led to the student protests as well as to understand the broader institutional culture on campus.

She informed alumni that the IRTC steering committee submitted its report which was discussed and approved at the June 2019 UCT Council meeting. Professor Feris said that the executive then had to provide a view on the commission's report. The commission reported to Council These views included:

1. That it was an important data source in terms of what is happening
2. However there is a concern regarding the low level of participation in the qualitative survey (public hearings) conducted. Consequently, there was concern that the IRTC was not able to foster the kind of reconciliation hoped for.

Professor Feris informed alumni that the committee was committed to implementing the recommendations that were approved by the Council. She indicated that some of the work has already commenced.

Professor Feris informed alumni that some of the IRTC recommendations were already happening and some were based on inaccurate information. For example: a recommendation that we reconsider the manner in which students are allocated into residences and that we consider a randomised system, which has in fact been in place for a number of years. Professor Feris said that there is an action list of 19 items and we are about to the report to council on progress against these items

An Inclusivity Survey was conducted which revealed staff satisfaction the one hand, and discontent in some areas, namely: advancement and development; bullying and harassment and discrimination, on the other hand. Professor Feris acknowledged that a great deal of work needs to be done to address these issues however she stated that this was an opportunity to move the university forward.

Professor Feris spoke about the work being done with communities on how UCT can recommit itself to addressing the injustices of the past. The Sutherland Project is one such process. She said UCT believe that through this initiative, we are restoring dignity to this community.

Professor Feris ended by highlighting that UCT is the only university in Afrika (and in the world) with an all-woman academic executive. She said that this says something about the way UCT takes transformation seriously. She ended by thanked the chair for the opportunity to address alumni.

The chairperson thanked DVC Professor Loretta Feris for her address and commended her and her team for the tremendous work done. She suggested that Professor Feris be invited back to discuss these topics further as there is so much more to discuss.

Approval of the minutes:

The chairperson requested a proposer and seconder for the approval of the minutes of the AGM held on 20 February 2019.

Mr Keith Gottschalk proposed the approval of the minutes
Mr Paki Zandile seconded the approval of the minutes

Matters Arising :

The chairperson asked whether there were any matters arising.

Keith Gottschalk: urged all alumni present to support UCT Summer School by attending the lectures.

In the absence of any additional matters arising, the chairperson then proceeded to presenting her report.

Alumni Advisory Board Chairperson's report:

The Chairperson, Dianna Yach then reported as follows: **[unedited full report]**

19 February 2020

Good evening Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Ferris and valued alumni.

I want to start with a few words of appreciation and thanks.

Thank you all for attending our AGM, to the VC, Mamokgethi Phakeng for her welcome address and DVC Loretta Ferris for giving us an update on transformation and to the Registrar, Royston Pillay for his participation.

I also want to thank alumni wherever they are based for their support in 2019, for attending alumni events and for providing various levels of support.

Thank you to all members of the Alumni Advisory Board for your committed service to the alumni community throughout the year.

Thank you to the Alumni Relations Office for their support to the board and alumni. Although the dedicated alumni team led by Libo Msengana-Bam is made up of only 4 members – their reach goes well beyond their small numbers and I want to appreciate the team which undertakes the bulk of alumni activities on behalf of the university. In my opinion and experience, this team is one of the hidden jewels of UCT. Libo and her team spend their time quietly and consistently reaching out and engaging with our alumni both at home and abroad in ways that address their needs and they deserve a round of applause for the work they do to advance our relationships with our alumni.

As we all know, the enterprise of alumni relations is much more than sending out the odd email – it is about knowing who our alumni are, where they are located, what their areas of expertise and interest

are and forging relationships with them, finding out how they would like to engage with UCT and what they would like to offer UCT in terms of time, expertise or treasure.

Building on last year's theme of "connecting reconnecting and reaching out to our diverse alumni", during 2019, the AAB and the Alumni Relations Office have focused on strengthening relationships with existing active alumni whilst also reaching out to disengaged, predominantly black alumni, who for the most part had negative experiences of their time at university.

This engagement doesn't happen of its own accord – it requires committed volunteers and staff, appropriate investment of resources to support the widest possible engagement with alumni. I want to acknowledge that many of these engagements were made possible through the Alumni Relations team's enthusiastic sponsorship efforts and many of these engagements resulted in alumni giving.

A key indicator of any successful university in the world is how engaged alumni are with our university. The fact that UCT continues to enjoy a top spot in the international rankings is in no small part due to the active engagement of our alumni. I am also proud that UCT is the only African university listed in the recent Emerging Universities Ranking as well.

We are fortunate to have close to 170,000 alumni spread across over 121 countries in the world with an increasing number of alumni coming from the rest of the African continent. Top 12 regions are:

- South Africa: 121,560
- United States of America: 13,841
- United Kingdom: 7,034
- Zimbabwe: -2,808
- Australia: 2,625
- Canada: 2,013
- Germany: 1,639
- Namibia: 1,478
- Botswana: 1,068
- New Zealand: 692
- Mauritius: 703
- Norway: 619

In any given year, alumni engagement includes the following:

- Events in support of the Vice-Chancellor's initiatives, including the institutional "for women by women" campaign to celebrate national Women's Month, the UCT student distress fund, food security programme and African leaders' programme
- Alumni dinners hosted abroad
- Alumni lifestyle events ranging from cycling, marathons, golf, jazz and cars
- Alumni Speaker Series events and alumni book launches
- Alumni milestone events such as Residence reunions, Faculty reunions and Golden graduation
- Student facing events: Orientation, Semester Study abroad cohorts, Faculty and SRC collaborations
- Support rendered to alumni chapters and affinity groups
- Collaborative events staged with UCT department and units

- And collaborative events staged with external partners e.g. Community Chest, Denis Goldberg House of Hope

In many of the above programmes and events, I want to acknowledge that our Vice-Chancellor has played a key role in creating an enabling environment for engagement with our local alumni and the broader global community of alumni, essentially as 'Fundraiser-in Chief' and many alumni have been encouraged to give to the university because of the confidence and high regard that they have for the VC.

I want to now reflect on two key successful alumni engagement programmes that were held in 2019:

1. Raising funds to reduce student hunger on campus
2. UCT Summer School joining Department of Development and Alumni Relations

Raising funds to reduce student hunger on campus:

The UCT Food Programme works to address student hunger on campus and remove the indignity that may be associated with food insecurity. During the 2019 Phonathon, alumni pledged more than R700,000 towards this core university initiative.

Each year UCT holds a phonathon to give alumni an opportunity to contribute funds for various on-campus initiatives, and to give current students the opportunity to connect with alumni. Organised by UCT's Development and Alumni Department (DAD), in partnership with Information and Communication Technology Services (ICTS), the 2019 phonathon focused on raising funds for the UCT Food Security Programme, a special initiative launched during the November 2018 exam season to address the issue of student hunger on campus.

Student hunger is a growing national challenge. In 2018 the National Research Foundation reported that more than 30% of South African students are food insecure, compared with 26% of the population. Campus food insecurity remains high at institutions across the country, including UCT.

The UCT Food Programme is a collaborative initiative involving several departments, as well as student and staff volunteers from across the university, under the leadership of Professor Loretta Feris, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Transformation. The programme feeds 600 students every weekday on campus, with each one receiving vouchers that are redeemable at Food Connect outlets on campus.

In 2019 the cost of a single daily voucher was R32. With 600 students being part of the current programme – and the number of affected students expected to increase – a total amount of R1.5 million is projected to be needed to fund the programme in 2020. The 2019 phonathon helped to raise more than R700,000 towards this target.

As the university continues to develop a sustainable food programme, it will explore various options for food security and harness the spirit of volunteerism that has already rallied UCT and the broader community.

UCT Summer School joins the Development and Alumni Department

The Centre for Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) which runs UCT's popular Summer School, found a new home in 2019 when it joined the university's Development and Alumni Department (DAD).

EMS was previously a part of the Centre for Higher Education Development. The 2020 iteration of the annual Summer School was the first to be held under the DAD umbrella.

The annual three-week public education programme, open to everyone, irrespective of formal qualifications, offers a variety of short courses – from arts to history and science.

The absence of entry requirements allows Summer School to realise its goal of serving as a public education programme. As its director Dr Medee Rall observed, "It's an annual opportunity for the public to benefit from the wealth of knowledge concentrated at the university."

Moreover, it's a chance for the university to stay in touch with its alumni, with many travelling from across the world to sample the January smorgasbord.

The Summer School offering has evolved over the years to meet changing societal needs and audience preferences. The offerings span the university's faculties, and participants can flit from a science seminar to a writing course, from a language class to a talk about the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It's the university in a nutshell, and Rall is itching for it to grow.

Future focus:

In conclusion, I want to encourage alumni to become more involved in the business of their alma mater: supporting the UCT priority projects; inviting you to either initiate/join alumni chapters in your respective regions and encouraging alumni participation in alumni events.

UCT belongs to all of us - we need to continue to work together to accelerate UCT efforts to become an even more inclusive, excellent, engaged and socially responsive institution.

Dianna M. Yach

[ends]

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned just at 19h45