

The Strategic Plan for the University of Cape Town 2010-2014

Introduction

The strategic plan for the University of Cape Town highlights the interventions we believe we need to make in order to develop UCT in particular ways over the next five to 10 years.

The plan takes as given that the core business of the institution, viz research, teaching and learning, will continue and that most of this activity is being conducted very successfully and at a very high level. As a result, they may not appear explicitly in the strategic plan, which is rather a focus on the change we need to introduce. Nor does the sum of every department's activities need to be reported within the framework of the strategic plan since many are continuations of what we have been doing and the main task is to improve how we do them. They do not need to be redefined in terms of new strategic goals.

In developing the strategic plan and in an attempt to highlight what changes we want to visibly achieve by 2014, we have focused on how to promote what is distinctive about UCT in the higher education landscape. We suggest these distinctions are:

- UCT's particular responsibility to produce the next generation of academics for South Africa and the rest of the continent
- UCT's tradition of commitment to social justice and democratic values and its desire to foreground this through its research, the values of its graduates and its social responsiveness activities
- UCT's leading position as a university on the African continent and its role as a global meeting point between North and South.

In addition, the strategic plan addresses these questions:

- What would make UCT the preferred university - the destination of choice - for students, young postdoctoral research fellows and senior academics in South Africa, Africa and internationally?
- How can UCT augment its activities to better answer the pressing social, economic and developmental problems facing South Africa and the rest of Africa?

Each of the goals that follow has relevance to – and directly addresses - at least two but in some cases all five points. Each goal is elaborated through a number of strategies. Although some strategies support more than one goal they have not been repeated as they form part of an integrated plan.

Goal One: Internationalising UCT via an Afropolitan Niche

Our goal is to:

- enhance UCT's position as an *Afropolitan university* by making it an intellectual meeting point and sought-after destination for scholars worldwide who have an interest in Africa's place in the world.
- strengthen UCT's *international research profile* through promoting academic exchanges and research dissemination and partnerships worldwide, including and especially South-South links;
- enhance *graduate attributes* by equipping students with knowledge and understanding of and, where possible, exposure to continental and international contexts;
- internationalise the student experience, through recruiting an internationally diverse student body and by innovative curricula development relevant to Africa and a globalised world;
- ensure that *staff development* includes skills for teaching diverse student bodies as well as significant international exposure as a regular part of career development;
- contribute to the resolution of problems of global significance through a wide range of *socially responsive* activities, including research, teaching and external policy engagement.

Strategies

1. Become an Afropolitan university

The Afropolitan strategy will encourage the study of African social, political and economic systems, the impact of climate change and biodiversity on different regions, infectious diseases and health systems, earth stewardship and geology across the continent and its oceans, African literature, philosophy and belief systems, evolving languages and culture, urbanisation and migration, and how to do business and invest in African economies, and more. UCT will participate in the study of indigenous knowledge systems, and will be receptive to learning even as we subject it to the rigorous critical analysis that we apply to all knowledge. These elements will impact on the course offerings and research programmes of many disciplines across the institution.

Many disciplines could create a niche for themselves as experts in their field on the continent and also in relation to emerging markets. This could place UCT and South Africa in a strong position to benefit from and strengthen South-South academic collaboration, particularly in relation to India, Brazil and China. An Afropolitan focus could also consolidate UCT's position as a sought-after partner for northern scholars and universities.

This appeal should extend beyond the academy, too: UCT must establish a profile as a preferred destination for businesses, governments, NGOs and policy-makers from all over the world that wish to work in Africa.

To these ends we will:

- a. increase the number of academic staff from the rest of the continent to ensure we have a concentration of expertise that brings an African lens to bear on global issues.
- b. increase our partnerships with leading researchers on the rest of the continent to consolidate and build long-term networks and increase the number of postgraduate students from the rest of Africa to develop the next generation of African academics.
- c. use and advance UCT's archives, for example in African film and other cultural heritages, as well as other unique assets, such as the Karoo telescopes, links to Antarctica and the three oceans, gene research laboratories and medical research infrastructure, to strengthen the university as an intellectual hub for the continent.
- d. grow and consolidate our many partnerships in the rest of Africa by carefully identifying faculty and trans-faculty niche areas, programmes and projects to which UCT could contribute and gain from
- e. support the dissemination and publication of work on Africa and increase the impact of local and regional journals.

2. Strengthen UCT's International Research Profile

UCT has centres of excellence in many different disciplines and for a long time has been a valued partner in the creation of knowledge and the resolution of problems of African and global significance. International research collaboration will be a priority of UCT's internationalisation strategy. UCT will facilitate existing and new research links forged at individual, departmental and faculty levels, while also pursuing a limited number of core institutional partnerships based on shared knowledge, mutual learning and strategic alliances.

3. Internationalise Graduate Attributes

UCT will seek to ensure that its graduates have the competencies to study in an electronic and global age, that they have the capacity for critical comparative thinking, and that they acquire effective cross-cultural communication skills. These will be introduced through methodologies and modalities used in the normal course of delivering the curriculum. We will encourage staff as part of their career development, to develop the skills for teaching diverse and intercultural student groups. We will promote the teaching of foreign languages, and where demand indicates, develop courses in languages spoken on the continent and of relevance to Africa, Asia and Latin America.

UCT aims to increase study-abroad opportunities for its postgraduate students so that they experience other ways of life and are exposed to new knowledge systems and perspectives. It will be necessary to identify institutional structures, policies, practices and resources that promote or provide entry points for articulation between UCT and international degree programmes. Altering degree formats and academic curricula does not imply a quick fix. The current UCT curriculum does not always accommodate this and creating opportunities to enhance graduate attributes will require working proactively where there is the opportunity to demonstrate the value of an open approach.

4. Strengthen Internationalisation at Home

Our graduates will have international careers and even in their home countries will work in a globalised environment. One way of preparing them for this is through 'internationalisation at home', which means addressing not only curriculum development but also the student experience. One aspect of this is interaction with international scholars studying at UCT on full degree programmes or as part of the Semester Study Abroad (SSA) programme. The university will seek to strengthen its capacity to host international students and enhance their engagement with South African students and researchers at UCT. We will tap into the growing demand from international students, especially postgraduates, for special study modules and full degrees, and offer exposure to other universities on the continent, where possible.

UCT plans to increase the number of SSA students without compromising local student access or programme quality. We will aim to increase the number of departments and faculties marketing themselves to SSA students. We also seek to diversify the countries of origin of SSA and full degree students to include other regions such as Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Latin America. We will use the SSA programme as a way of providing opportunities for South African students to gain international exposure, especially as postgraduates, through exchange agreements with sending institutions, joint fund-raising, and subsidising the international travel of South African students from SSA programme income.

5. Promote transformation through internationalisation

Links with comparator institutions in the rest of Africa and emerging market countries are an important means of extending the international exposure and engagement of our students and researchers. We envisage building opportunities for junior researchers and academics through our intellectual partnerships. To do this we will use resources generated by our international student intake to assist in financing opportunities abroad for South African postgraduates and researchers.

Another critical component of UCT's internationalisation strategy is to increase the international exposure and experience of UCT academics, especially staff members who have not had the opportunity to study abroad in the early phases of their careers. We aim for staff development to include support and opportunities through partnerships for study visits abroad (and including the rest of Africa), attendance and paper presentation at international conferences, and engagement in other scholarly activities globally, which serve to broaden horizons and increase confidence.

As it seeks to increase the number of international postgraduate students undertaking master's degrees and doctoral research, UCT recognises that there are affordability issues for non-SADC African research students and the issue of where to set fees for African students in relation to home and international fees must be debated. Similarly, resources and mechanisms need to be found for multi-year funding for international doctoral students.

Internationalisation and social responsiveness will be linked through a focus on issues of global citizenship and social justice that provides the UCT community with exposure to debates of global significance and opportunities for engaged policy research and service learning.

6. Engage with government policy

UCT has an important role to play in influencing debates in the higher education sector in relation to increasing South Africa's global competitiveness as a centre for higher learning that receives students from within and beyond South Africa. The university needs to play a leading role in lobbying the relevant government departments to relax legislation relating to the higher education sector, including developing frameworks that accommodate international credit transfer and degree recognition. Further, South African immigration laws are 'unfriendly' to international students and can create impossible barriers to studying in South Africa and at UCT. Given our internationalisation strategy and in the wake of the xenophobic attacks of 2008, this is a matter of some urgency.

Goal Two: Transformation of UCT Towards Non-Racialism – Redress, Diversity, Inclusiveness and the Recognition of African Voices

GOAL

UCT's goal is to achieve a more representative demographic profile in the staff and student bodies, enhanced intellectual diversity, a transcendence of the idea of race, an improved institutional climate and an enhanced focus of our intellectual enterprise on African perspectives.

UCT is committed to the goal of non-racialism. A non-racial university is one where historical apartheid categories are no longer relevant to the probability that a student will be admitted, will pass, or to a staff member's likelihood of promotion. A transformed university will be one in which we no longer hold stereotypical views of others based on their gender, race or disability. Such stereotypes may be dissolved because we have consciously overcome them and because the generalisations no longer apply. A transformed university moreover, will be one in which the underlying historical power relationships, of which various forms of discrimination are symptoms, are fundamentally altered and equalised.

However, we are not there now, and so intervention along race, gender and disability lines remains necessary. We will, however, use instruments and measures of race only where they are necessary to promote transformation; and we will eschew the use of racial categorisation whenever we can, to promote our ultimate goal, namely a community of scholars that is aware of the legacy of race and racism in South Africa but has moved beyond its effects.

Aside from the transformation *of* UCT, UCT is profoundly concerned with transformation in the broader society and with issues of social justice. These are elaborated in goals 5 and 6.

STRATEGIES

When we speak of the transformation of UCT over the next five years, we mean: (i) implementing policies that result in a change to the university's student and staff demography in order, ultimately, to become a truly non-racial institution, and to reduce gender inequities at senior staff levels; (ii) making the university a place that is experienced by all its staff and students as being inclusive and nurturing, and (iii) developing inclusive curricula and engaging with African voices.

1. Demographic change is necessary both as a corrective action in respect of past injustices *and* as a positive virtue to create the critical diversity of perspectives contribute to the education of all students and also produce new insights. It is also necessary to promote an inclusive atmosphere within the institution, and prepare students for a multicultural world of work. UCT will seek to have:

- (i) the full diversity of South Africa represented at UCT, weighted towards the disadvantaged communities of the Western Cape; and
- (ii) a significant number of students and staff from other African countries and further afield.

With regard to our student equity profile, good progress has been made at the undergraduate level, but the profile of postgraduate enrolments and several specific UG programmes remains predominantly white. We will aspire to have a first-year intake, which would be an average of national and Western Cape demographic profiles of university-eligible school leavers.¹

2. Strengthening student support to improve course success and throughput rates

¹ We will carefully monitor the applications by disabled students and implement measures to provide support where appropriate to make it easier for disabled students to gain access to UCT and promote research on the impact of the national policies on inclusive education on the ability of disabled learners to access higher education.

After the HEQC's audit of UCT in May 2005, the university developed a Quality Improvement Plan, which included a number of strategies to improve support for students. These included strengthening the tutorial system through the provision of more effective training and monitoring of tutors, the establishment of mentoring and early warning systems, the expansion of extended curriculum programmes, the use of VULA to supplement lectures, the establishment of hot seats, vacation assignments, and strengthening curriculum advice. We have designed a web-based course-monitoring tool that integrates the provision of quantitative data with qualitative feedback from the students to enable heads of departments to identify problem areas timeously and to encourage staff to research, monitor and improve their teaching. While the performance gap between black and white students has diminished in recent years, significant challenges remain to redress continuing imbalances. We recognise the unevenness of the above interventions across university and we will monitor and expand them. This requires supporting staff in learning how to teach differently to new generations of students. The NSC curricula needs to be better understood and engaged with and academics require support in honing their teaching skills to multicultural and multilingual environments. We need to be more systematic in promoting other forms of support that supplement academic interventions, e.g. in the residences, social mentorship and integration into university culture and counselling.

Mention affective forms of support

In improving our staff demographic profile, the *retention of staff* will be a key element in our strategy – and the retention rate will be directly affected, not only by the institutional climate (addressed in section 3), but also by the level of support that the university gives its young staff. The recruitment and development interventions will be strengthened.

3. Inclusiveness: UCT as a place that is 'owned' by all its staff and students, and by the community

Black students, staff and many women experience UCT's culture as alienating, closed to transformation and they feel like visitors in a white male club. Dissatisfaction also arises between academic and PASS staff. Only if we *succeed in creating an affirming, positive environment for all* will we be able to retain our staff and create the vibrant, diverse body of people that we need to be a truly great university. Central to the task is being mindful of UCT's diversity of views and to promote an ethos of mutual respect. We need to focus on treating people equally, overcoming deep beliefs and conditioning that some are better than others, overcoming the stereotypes we hold, and valuing diversity and difference.

Central also in promoting an environment that is inclusive is the need for the university to strengthen its relationship with communities of Cape Town that were historically excluded from UCT. The university is regarded by many in the city as a place that is either beyond their reach or too inhospitable. If it is to transform itself into an inclusive space of learning and teaching it has to change these perceptions. Expanding outreach work, social responsiveness activities in these communities, public relations, improved school liaison, and highlighting the achievements of alumni from these communities will be necessary.

4. Inclusive curricula and engagement with African voices

Transformation in a university context must also touch the substance of what we learn, teach and research.

Students in post-apartheid SA must have a critical knowledge and understanding of the country's history and the experience of its citizens. The implications of this history must be made relevant to their fields of study and future work.

Students should gain an understanding of how ways of thinking and bodies of knowledge may be embedded in historical power relations. They should engage with debates on the extent to which, in some disciplines, the hegemony of Eurocentric approaches to knowledge, history, value systems and belief systems may have influenced or undermined African world views and perspectives.²

² We must be mindful always of the centuries-long interchange between African and European thought, each of which has substantially influenced the other, so that we avoid static, reified versions of Africa and its indigenous knowledge systems.

Research and teaching should give more space and acknowledgement to African voices, and particularly African intellectuals, who should merit the same critical engagement as those from the west.

This not only transforms the university's intellectual project, it also contributes to promoting an inclusive institutional climate in that South African students and students from the rest of the continent, engage with histories, bodies of knowledge and thought leaders from their own heritage.

Goal Three: Working Towards a Desired Size and Shape for UCT³

GOAL

To strengthen the role UCT plays in producing the future generation of researchers and academics for the country and the continent, enhance our efforts to address critical high level skill shortages facing the country.

Our strategic approach to enrolment planning for the next five years is based on a consideration of our strengths within a single, but differentiated higher education system, as well as the need for all public higher education institutions to support national efforts to address the critical high-level skill shortages facing the country. To grow towards and beyond the target of 24 000 students, as agreed with the Department of Education, we will focus on strengthening our efforts to recruit more students for research-oriented postgraduate degrees as we believe that this should be UCT's niche in the national higher education landscape⁴. However, we will continue to explore ways of expanding postgraduate diplomas and course-work master's using more flexible modes of delivery. We remain committed to being an institution with a broad undergraduate base in humanities, science and the major professions. In line with our strategic focus on producing the future generation of academics we will review whether there is a need to alter the nature of our PhD programmes in order to enhance their effectiveness in preparing people for academic careers.

STRATEGIES

1. Increasing numbers in the research-oriented postgraduate qualifications

As a research-led institution with the highest number of rated researchers in the country, and one of the highest proportions of PhD and Master's students, the primary goal of our enrolment plan for the next five to ten years will be to increase the absolute number of Master's and Doctoral⁵. This may necessitate appropriate adjustments in our administrative systems and the expansion of support to address the particular needs of postgraduate students and the strengthening of a postgraduate culture. We will pursue multiple strategies to recruit more honours students such as refining our procedures for recruiting tutors and research assistants to ensure greater diversity, strengthening bursary support, and expanding opportunities for UG students to be exposed to research projects to attract them to postgraduate study.

2. To ensure a critical mass in all UG courses

We will explore the expansion of any UG programmes where expansion would yield a surplus after additional teaching resources and student services (including the provision of food outlets, lecture theatres, laboratories, and equipment) are provided. We will also seek to explore alternative teaching models for working with large classes, including the expanded use of ICTs to enhance interactivity and engagement in large classes such as discussion and chat forums, wikis, blogs and other shared spaces. ICTs will also be used to complement tutorials and provide feedback to students. The residence system will be expanded so that more students can access UCT and benefit from the support offered by the residences. These measures will help to ensure that any increased intake of undergraduate students will not undermine our commitment to improving the quality of the student experience and performance. We will identify courses that are not operating at full capacity and generate strategies to market these courses more effectively. While international students enrich the intellectual atmosphere of the university we are constrained to limit the international UG intake due to the physical constraints on the absolute number of UG we can accommodate and the need for redress for local SA students. Faculties will take this into consideration when setting their annual enrolment targets.

³ Proposals pertaining to the demographic profile of students are contained in Goal Two.

⁴ Postdoctoral research fellows are not regarded as students and are therefore not included in this consideration of the desired size and shape of the student population

⁵ This may be associated with a decline in the proportion of postgraduate students relative to the total student population.

3. Enhancing our contribution to addressing scarce skills

Skills shortages in critical areas of the economy such as engineering and planning skills for the 'network industries' and for infrastructure development, urban and regional skills for local government, municipalities; high-level management and planning skills for the public sector particularly in the areas of education and health, and teachers in key subjects such as mathematics and science, pose a major threat to economic growth and development and the delivery of basic services in the public sector. Two major constraints on our ability to address these skills shortages have been the severe shortage of residence places and teaching space on the Upper Campus. The infrastructure grants that we have received from the Department of Education will enable us to increase numbers in these scarce skills areas. UCT has expressed its willingness to increase UG enrolments in engineering and architecture and introduce offerings in the field of nuclear engineering. The Faculty of Health Sciences plans to introduce a number of new postgraduate diplomas designed to contribute to addressing high-level management and planning skills in the health sector. The School of Education is planning to expand enrolments in the PGCE, specifically catering for the Foundation Phase. The planned new building for the School of Economics will enable the school to position itself to introduce new specialised streams in the master's and honours programmes to address skills needs in the broad commercial field.

4. To support continuing education

UCT recognises that higher education is a central means of upgrading or refreshing skills of older adults. We are committed to promoting opportunities for lifelong learning, particularly at the postgraduate level, without increasing the burden on academic staff, through the use of more flexible modes of delivery. In line with our commitment to promoting continuing education we will continue to advocate for the introduction of a professional master's degree aimed at people who wish to upgrade their knowledge and skills and build their theoretical understanding of their professions. These mature students play a valuable role in marketing UCT in their communities. The Graduate School of Business is committed to helping to provide customised management training programmes to address high-level management skills needs in the public and private sectors.

Goal Four: A Vision for the Development of Research at UCT: Greater Impact, Greater Engagement

What does it mean to be ‘research-led’?

In recent years, UCT has described itself as ‘research-led’ in its policy documents and the question is: what does, and should, this appellation mean to us today?

The designation ‘research-led’ signifies that we accept the obligation of being one of the core sites in South Africa that aims to make the country competitive in the global knowledge economy and to educate its future leaders. To be such a university encompasses primarily two things:

First, it presupposes that the *quality of the research that it does must be excellent*, as measured by its impact and, secondly, it requires that *research informs everything* that it does, especially the other areas of its core business, namely teaching and socially responsive work.

The concept paper therefore has two main foci, namely the improvement of (a) the impact and (b) the level of engagement of our research.

1. Impact: The Measure of Excellence

While recognising the limitations of bibliometric measures of impact and the need to avoid reducing research excellence to simple measures of impact, we must acknowledge the strategic importance of these measures, as the basis upon which global and national university rankings are made. Various measuring instruments identify UCT as the top research university in Africa. However, a recent study shows that if the field-normalised score of the impact of our academic departments is compared to that of similar departments in the rest of the world we are often below the mean impact of our global competitors. This means that, though we are doing well, we can do better. How, then, can we have a greater impact? We must improve four aspects of our research, namely its (a) *focus*, (b) *level of internationalisation*, (c) *visibility*, and (d) *support levels*, including support along the full innovation chain in respect of inventions and other research outputs with marketable possibilities.

1.1 Increased focus

Successful research occurs where an institution focuses its money and effort into those things that it does really well. Our signature themes, our system of accrediting research groupings, our set of SARChI chairs, and our participation in networks and initiatives that span different universities are all examples of how focus can successfully enhance the quality of research. It has now become necessary to create even greater focus in all sectors of the university’s research effort by giving increased support to our successful research groupings and identifying new groupings that need to be brought into being.

1.2 Increased internationalisation

A common denominator of successful universities – both in the developed and the developing world – is that they place great store by being internationally connected, not only by having an appreciable percentage of international staff and students, but also by linking their research efforts internationally. We now need to move to a new level of targeted international research co-operation and we need to stimulate the international linkage of researchers and research groupings that have little or no international contact and/or partners. Specifically, we need to grow clusters of interdisciplinary collaboration that foster our Afropolitan image and assert the advantage of our location in Africa.

1.3 Increased visibility

The more visible our research is, the greater its impact will be. We need to optimise the use of ICT tools to showcase UCT’s research. This includes making research outputs such as PhD theses and other appropriate publications digitally available and improving and updating the navigation of the UCT website. UCT urgently needs to acquire appropriate systems and software to facilitate these functions.

1.4 Increased support

Support takes various forms: providing assistance to apply for funds and rating; making available sufficient funds for research; having programmes that develop new and mid-career researchers; ensuring that research

time is not unnecessarily eroded by inadequate planning; smoothing the passage of postdoctoral research fellows when taking up their posts; ensuring a good experience for postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows; facilitating the conclusion of research contracts as well as the protection and exploitation of IP. In this regard it is vitally important that we build on the advances made in the recent past to bring our support for technology transfer to a truly international level. In short, researchers need time, money and good conditions to be successful. The university must constantly review its current support arrangements to ensure delivery on all three requirements at an optimal level; and must take cognisance of the fact that different types of researchers have different needs, eg non-GOB funded researchers often face special challenges that need creative solutions.

2. Engagement: Making research relevant to teaching and socially responsive work

Our research must engage (a) our students and (b) the community in our city, region and continent. A good university will, first, make sure that its students are exposed to the benefits of the research that is done within its walls and, secondly, it will seek to extend those benefits to the community within which it operates. It is especially appropriate that a university in a developing country should earn the respect of the community that it serves by making a difference to the problems faced by the community – and we, too, must aspire to be a university that is not irrelevant to the problems that surround it. Equally pertinent are modes of civic engagement that aim to popularise new ideas generated by academics and animate critical public debate on key issues of the day. This is one of the key ways in which universities bolster the democratic project.

2.1 Bringing research into teaching

To be a research-led university, our research must inform our teaching. All UCT students must experience the importance of creating new knowledge by virtue of the fact that their teachers infuse their courses with the results of their research. We must multiply the incentives for research to be fed into all levels of teaching and for encouraging research by all students. In this regard it is important to revisit the documents on the linkage between research and teaching that have been developed in UCT in the recent past, in order to develop a comprehensive strategy for integrating research into teaching.

2.2 Bringing research into the community: Being Afropolitan

We believe that UCT should be *a model of a developing-world university* – a brilliant example of what such a university can and should do. Such a university looks to both the world and its own country and continent to identify its tasks and challenges; it combines excellent research (for that is the key to South Africa's and the African continent's future) with a commitment to do research that improves the condition of the people of the country and continent and to unlock their potential. For instance, space research can be done both to understand the evolution of the universe and to help manage, through satellite technology, our ever-growing cities as well as the problems of food and water security, urbanisation and transport; cutting-edge biotechnology can curb disease, assist in pollution-control and industrial and commercial development through bio-catalysts; the sociological analysis of African economic phenomena can assist in the development of our continent, at the same time as contributing to wider global debates about poverty and inequality, gender and work, formal and informal markets etc; the study of South African constitutionalism offers the possibility of creating a hub for research into good governance for the country, and the continent as a whole – at the same time as shaping more international debates and practices of constitution-making. These are just some examples of the social innovation that must be encouraged at UCT; research that is focused on being world-class and doing what is relevant in a developing country.

Goal Five: Enhancing the Quality and Profile of UCT's Graduates

GOAL

Our mission is to educate students who will have a broad foundational knowledge that goes beyond the immediate requirements of their professional degree or major discipline; who will be equipped to compete in a globalised workplace; who will have a spirit of critical enquiry through research-led teaching; and who will have an understanding of the role they can play in addressing social justice issues.

STRATEGIES

1. Identifying distinctive features of the UCT Undergraduate curriculum

In strengthening the focus on teaching many top universities have chosen to identify distinctive graduate attributes, beyond the content knowledge and disciplinary expertise that is taught. Across UCT many departments have designed their curricula around desired exit-level outcomes for graduates. UCT needs to debate whether there are distinctive attributes with which we would like UCT graduates to exit, in line with our mission above, and whether we hope that all our students, or only those who choose to engage, graduate with these attributes.

2. Preparing UCT graduates for a global workplace

Universities are ever more networked internationally while their graduates are increasingly mobile. UCT has to ensure its graduates are well prepared for that future. This is covered in detail in Goal One on internationalising UCT.

3. Providing opportunities for more breadth within our undergraduate curriculum

Currently there is a misconception that the general academic bachelors degree is a three-year degree. Analysis of cohort success rates indicates that the majority of students are not graduating within three years. There is also a concern that it is not possible to provide sufficient breadth within the structure of the three-year degree because we have to deal with diversity in educational background as well as provide disciplinary foundations for further study. As a result, we are struggling to find time in the undergraduate curriculum to: accommodate opportunities for students to develop skills for active local and global citizenship; acquire a better knowledge of the African continent so that our graduates are able to bring a contemporary African focus to their future professional work; gain basic competence in other languages, especially in indigenous South African languages and major languages spoken in other parts of Africa; and have more time for problem-based research projects. Given that the national norm for the completion of undergraduate formative degrees is four years, we will debate the desirability of formalising this in the structure of the curriculum, paying attention to discipline-specific constraints and opportunities. We will consider different models for three- and four-year bachelor degrees in order to formulate a clear set of proposals for submitting to the Department of Education. In the meantime, in order to improve on the breadth of the undergraduate learning experience, the university will encourage students to do subjects outside their chosen disciplinary/professional field where the curriculum allows for this. We will explore how to offer more flexible programmes such as summer schools, vacation-based service learning, additional courses in normal curriculum, parallel additional enrichment or honours programme.

4. Ensuring graduates are critical thinkers and stimulating interest in postgraduate research

If UCT's mission is to produce the next generation of academics, recruiting from its own undergraduate pool is an important source of researchers. UCT graduates should have an understanding of the contested nature of knowledge in their disciplines, be competent in using a range of information sources and evaluating the reliability of those sources and in the context of an undergraduate curriculum that is up-to-date and, where appropriate, informed by the research of academic staff. We should explore the opportunities of allowing students in certain programmes to undertake or assist with research projects, or even to offer an elective research paper in lieu of a semester course.

5. Strengthening student support to improve success and throughput rates and develop organisational skills

UCT has a number of strategies in place to improve support for students. These include strengthening the tutorial system, mentoring and early warning systems, curriculum advice, and the enhanced use of VULA. We will monitor and develop these and further strategies to support learning on the part of new generations of students and teaching skills for multicultural and multilingual student bodies.

We will develop a more systematic approach to the other supporting activities that improve student success rates such as structured programmes in the residences and day houses, counselling and support, mentorship, and extended orientation programmes.

The particular role of student governance structures at SRC, house committee, club and society executives in developing the leadership qualities of graduates will be strengthened.

6. Expanding academic staff development and promoting innovative teaching and learning methodologies

The diversity of knowledge fields means that there are many legitimate modes of delivery to ensure effective teaching practices. A particular challenge for UCT is to cater effectively for student diversity in mainstream courses, through reviewing learning structures and strengthening alignment between the desired learning objectives, the design of the curriculum and the choice of assessment practices. We will consolidate and expand teaching innovation grants and other incentives for the development and dissemination of educational strategies that address this challenge.

We recognise that efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the institution are more likely to succeed if there is an appropriate enabling institutional environment. We are therefore committed to academic staff development and rewarding teaching and learning alongside research. We will create a policy and infrastructure environment that provides research-based spaces for experimentation, support for innovation and rewards for staff engaging with their teaching in a scholarly manner, e.g. questioning and evaluating the effectiveness of their teaching and researching ways to improve their own teaching practice. We will place a particular emphasis on encouraging innovation in relation to developing research-ready attitudes in students, developing teaching methods based on research-informed learning theories and the application of new technologies to the teaching environment. UCT is committed to fully taking advantage of the new ICT-enabled information and communication order to enhance the teaching and learning environment. We will also monitor the effectiveness of our teaching on the basis of both internal indicators such as retention and completion rates, as well as comparative national and international benchmarking.

Goal Six: Expanding and Enhancing UCT's Contribution to South Africa's Development Challenges

GOAL

Our strategic goal for the next five years is to strengthen UCT's role in addressing key development challenges facing our society through engaged research, policy and advocacy, strategic partnerships and expanding opportunities for students to become involved in community-engaged education programmes. Through direct experience in socially-responsive learning, our students will be able to acquire the necessary civic literacy, knowledge and skills to build a more just, equitable, and unified South African society.

STRATEGIES

1. Enhancing UCT's contribution to social reconstruction and development through engaged research and teaching

Our country faces a number of critical threats to the success of its development. These include continued high levels of poverty and inequality, violent crime, the poor quality of education in most of our public schools, the lack of infrastructure development, rapid urbanisation, preventable diseases and others. UCT will appoint experts to lead and co-ordinate intellectual projects that draw on the strengths of individual departments across the university to enhance UCT's impact in addressing the problems of public schooling, climate change and sustainable development, violent crime, poverty, and unemployment. We are also committed to strengthening the link between these research efforts and the teaching and learning process, so that these critical real-world issues can be part of a UCT student's learning experience.

2. Promoting democracy, respect for human rights and commitment to social justice

We are concerned about threats to our fragile democracy, and the prevalence of value systems among citizens, including students, that promote individual success and materialism with little concern for others and little commitment to activities that promote the public good.

The vice-chancellor is committed to creating spaces for more public debate through encouraging academic staff to provide public commentary on topical issues, open lectures and the vice chancellor's lecture series. A climate of tolerance for differing views and a respectful style of debate must be fostered to ensure no-one is afraid to express their views. The university's academics and leaders are encouraged to fulfil their socially mandated role as opinion shapers and critics.

UCT believes that opportunities for student engagement with external constituencies, afforded by service-learning programmes, can be important vehicles for inter-disciplinary learning, enhancing the breadth and diversity of the students' educational experience and producing graduate citizens capable of reflecting on the implications of living and working in different social contexts. We will expand opportunities for students to get involved in community-based projects in which community engagement, a focus on social justice issues and students' learning are integrated into the formal teaching and learning process. We will explore the feasibility of establishing a social justice and community-engaged teaching and learning project in CHED to provide staff development for service learning initiatives. UCT will develop an appropriate reward and recognition system as part of promoting student leadership and student volunteerism initiatives that benefit internal and external communities.

3. Strengthening partnerships with various levels of government, civil society and universities in South Africa

UCT's strategic approach to partnerships with government will involve promoting awareness within government of UCT's research strengths and niche programme offerings to support better policy making, implementation and evaluation. We will strengthen partnerships with all levels of government. We will work towards the establishment of a visible mechanism or gateway for enabling external communities and NGOs to access knowledge, skills, resources and professional expertise within UCT around problems experienced by these organisations, where there is an appropriate fit with the desires and capacity of staff and students in the university. We believe that the complexity of many of the challenges facing our country necessitates collaboration with multiple stakeholders, including other universities. We will therefore forge strategic

partnerships with various universities in South Africa to maximise the contributions of the university sector to the development of our country.

4. Promoting the scholarship of engagement

UCT will continue to share information about innovative practices of social responsiveness through annual reports, the use of interactive websites, seminars and colloquia to promote the scholarship of social responsiveness and reflection on how SR practices can be improved.

5. Creating an enabling institutional environment

The University Social Responsiveness Committee will oversee the implementation and review of the Social Responsiveness Policy Framework, which seeks to provide support and appropriate incentives for expanding and strengthening social responsiveness.