

University of Cape Town

Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Higher
Education, Science and Innovation

30 August 2023



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD



Vision 2030 - Unleash Human Potential to Create a Fair and Just Society

Vision 2030 is the result of inclusive and transformative leadership at UCT. It was developed to give expression to UCT's massive transformative purpose – “Unleash human potential to create a fair and just society” – in the core academic functions, the cross-cutting responsibilities of transformation and social responsiveness, and the systems that support and sustain UCT's work.

There are three pillars at the core of vision 2030:

- Excellence
- Transformation
- Sustainability



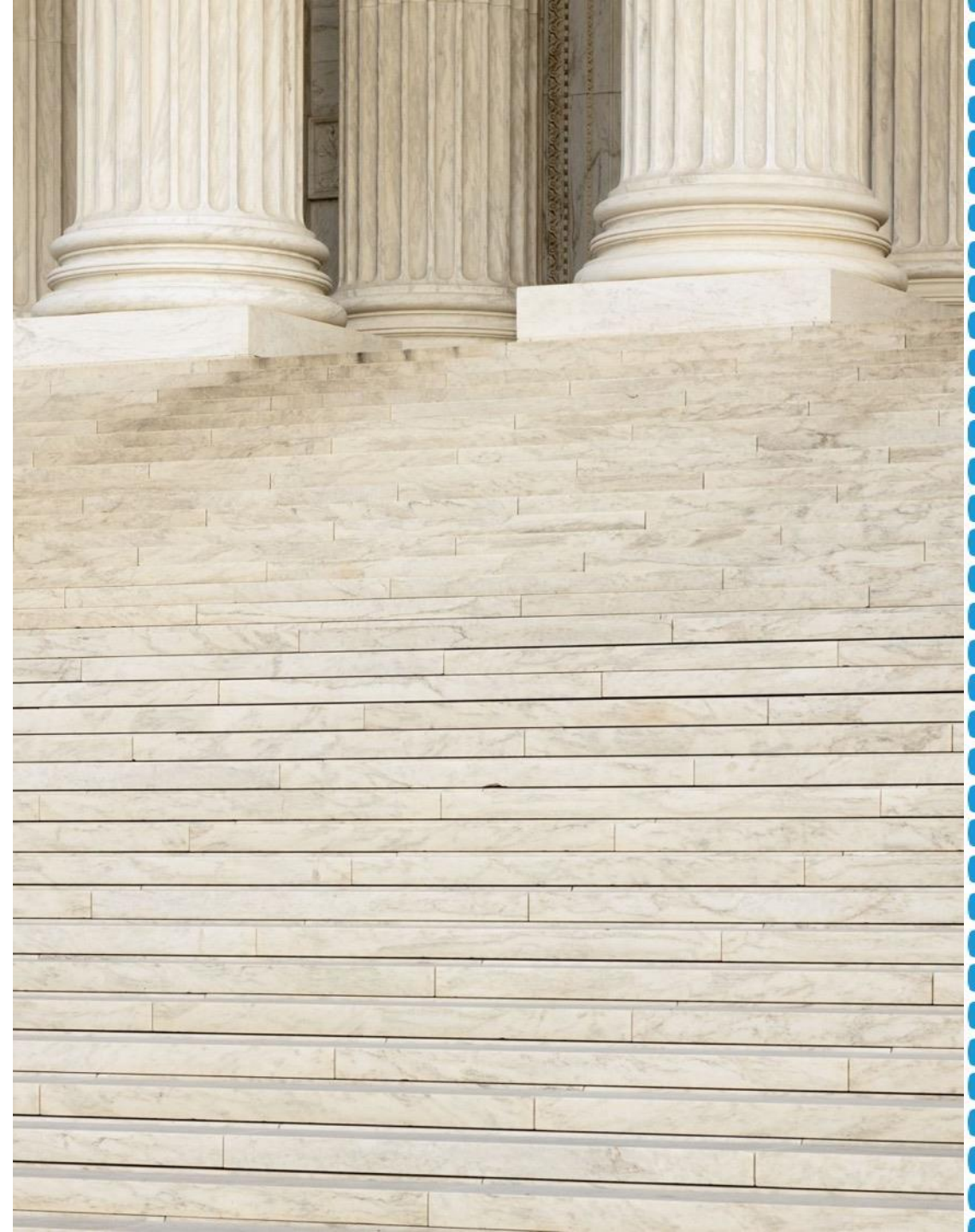
Focus areas

1. Overview of the state of Council and management.
2. Briefing on the circumstances leading to the resignations of the former Vice-Chancellor and Chair of Council.
3. Findings of the report of the Independent Panel investigating governance challenges at the university.
4. Overview of the state of teaching and learning at the university.
5. Overview of the finances of the university.



Overview of the state of Council and Management

- Notwithstanding the recent challenges at UCT, including the resignations of four external members, Council continues to function. The term of the current Council will end on 30 June 2024.
- There is currently one Council member vacancy (out of a total of 30 members) and the Appointments Committee of Council is attending to filling this vacancy.
- The positions of Council Chair and Deputy Chair are filled, and the Chairs of the key Council committees are in place. These committees function according to their composition rules, meeting schedule and terms of reference.



Overview of the state of Council and Management

- A review application has been lodged by the former Deputy Chair of Council, seeking to set aside the Council decision to remove the officer concerned from the position of Deputy Chair. Council is following the required legal process to oppose this application and due process will follow.
- The former Deputy Chair of Council who lodged the review application remains a member of Council.



Overview of the state of Council and Management

Other arms of institutional governance are in place and functioning.

- The University Senate and the Institutional Forum give the required due attention to their mandates in terms of the HE Act and the UCT Statute.
- The IF membership includes 10 members elected or appointed by Council, the Senate and the Vice-Chancellor; 10 members elected by the recognised staff bodies; and 10 members elected by the SRC.
- The Convocation convenes its AGM as required, and the President of Convocation is supported by an advisory group.
- The SRC is in place and conducts its affairs in terms of its rules. It appoints three student members to Council and 12 student members to the Senate.

Overview of the state of Council and Management

- Following the departure of the former Vice-Chancellor, Council appointed an interim VC, Professor Daya Reddy, with effect from 14 March 2023.
- The selection process to fill the position of VC on a substantive basis has commenced and the current Council endeavours to complete this process by the time its term ends on 30 June 2024.
- The process to constitute the new Council will commence towards the end of 2023.



Executive positions

There are four senior management posts that are currently vacant, but filled in an interim or acting capacity. These are:

Deputy VC Teaching & Learning (Professor Linda Ronnie, Acting DVC, and formerly the Dean of Commerce at UCT).

Chief Operating Officer (Mr Mughtar Parker, Acting COO and current Executive Director of Properties & Services at UCT).

Executive Director HR (Mr Bongani Ndaba, Acting ED HR and current Director of Organisational Development & Effectiveness at UCT).

Dean of Science (Professor Patrick Woudt, Acting Dean).

For each of the above, the selection processes are at an advanced planning stage or have already commenced.

Each of UCT's other senior management posts (Deputy VCs, Deans, Registrar, CFO, Executive Directors) is currently substantively filled.



Circumstances leading to the resignation of the former VC and former Chair of Council

- The former VC elected to take early retirement as VC with effect from 3 March 2023; and as professor in the School of Education with effect from 1 April 2023.
- The university's agreement with the former VC requires that any public announcements and press statements are to be mutually agreed to between the parties.
- Council has respected this agreement while having noted with concern the allegations concerning the university and its Council in a number of media statements.
- *(Refer to the section on the Panel re the resignation of the former Chair of Council.)*



Findings of the Independent Panel investigating governance challenges at UCT

- The Panel of Investigation was established by resolution of Council in October 2022. Following the process to constitute the Panel, it commenced its work on 31 January 2023.
- Council agreed to the Panel's request to extend its deadline, accepting the Panel's motivation regarding the extent to which its investigation has expanded, and the number of interested parties it had to interview.
- Council expects to receive the final report of the Panel at the end of September 2023.





Findings of the Independent Panel investigating governance challenges

- The Panel released an interim report to Council on 17 May 2023.
- The stated purpose of the interim report was to recommend that Council take steps to remove the former Chair of Council from this position for reasons related to urgency and Council's duty in respect of its fiduciary obligations.
- Council deemed this interim report confidential. The exposure of the interim report in the media was outside of a Council process. The interim report was included in the High Court legal review application brought by the former Chair of Council.





Findings of the Independent Panel investigating governance challenges

- The former Chair of Council informed members of Council via an email dated 22 May 2023 of her decision to resign as a member and Chair of Council.
- Council, having considered the Panel's interim report, accepted the resignation of the former Chair of Council on 30 May 2023.
- Council now awaits the final report of the Panel and will apply its mind to that report once it is received.
- Council is also dealing with the legal review application that has been launched in the Western Cape High Court (on 18 May 2023) by the former Chair of Council seeking to set aside the appointment of the Panel.





Findings of the Independent Panel investigating governance challenges

- Council awaits the final report of the Panel – the expected date is 30 September 2023.
- Council is alive to the urgency of this matter and will give the report urgent attention on receipt thereof, recognising that this process is a crucial and required component to assist Council and the university in the process of moving forward.
- Council also recognises concerns related to the delay in the submission of the signed audit report on the 2022 Annual Report. The external auditors are waiting for Council to pronounce on the final report of the Panel before finalising their report.



Overview of the state of teaching and learning at the university

Teaching, learning and research are the university's core business and whose interests are at the heart of governance systems that must be secured and improved where required; and Council is giving attention to this.





First in Africa on international rankings

WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS IN 2022

World rankings

1st IN AFRICA	160th IN THE WORLD THE 2023	125th IN THE WORLD US NEWS 2022-2023	237th IN THE WORLD QS 2023	270th IN THE WORLD CWUR 2022-2023	201-300 IN THE WORLD ARWU 2022
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Reputation rankings
176-200th
IN THE WORLD
THE 2022

Most international universities in the world
55th
IN THE WORLD
THE 2022

Impact rankings
101-200th
IN THE WORLD
THE 2022

- Individual SDG ranks:
- SDG 1 No poverty: **31st**
 - SDG 3 Good health and well-being: **201-300th**
 - SDG 5 Gender equality: **37th**
 - SDG 10 Reduced inequalities: **101-200th**
 - SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong Institutions: **95th**
 - SDG 17 Partnerships for the goals: **55th**

UCT's top performing subjects



TOP 10
Development studies
9th IN THE WORLD

QS 2022

TOP 50
Environmental Science & Engineering
24th IN THE WORLD

GRAS 2022

Infectious Diseases
24th IN THE WORLD

US NEWS 2022-2023

Sport Science Schools and Departments
49th IN THE WORLD

SHANGHAIRANKING 2022

TOP 100
Anthropology
51-100th IN THE WORLD

QS 2022

Architecture/
Built Environment
51-100th IN THE WORLD

QS 2022

Geography
51-100th IN THE WORLD

QS 2022

Medicine
88th IN THE WORLD

QS 2022

Clinical & Health
77th IN THE WORLD

THE 2023

TOP 100
Clinical Medicine
76-100th IN THE WORLD

GRAS 2022

Mining & Mineral Engineering
76-100th IN THE WORLD

GRAS 2022

Oceanography
51-75th IN THE WORLD

GRAS 2022

Public Health
76-100th IN THE WORLD

GRAS 2022

TOP 100
Immunology
51st IN THE WORLD

US NEWS 2022-2023

Psychiatry/
psychology
90th IN THE WORLD

US NEWS 2022-2023

Public, Environmental and Occupational Health
51st IN THE WORLD

US NEWS 2022-2023

Social Sciences and Public Health
66th IN THE WORLD

US NEWS 2022-2023





Student enrolment

Faculty	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 Provisional
UG	17494	17320	17063	17809	17741	17725
PG	10852	11250	11384	11635	11474	11204
TOTAL	28744	28641	28447	29444	29215	28929

With our new Size and Shape strategy in development, UCT’s enrolment plan aims for 29 000 to 30 000 students. This has been achieved with the 60:40 split for UG vs PG as befits our vision as a research-led institution.

Undergraduate student applications *[as of 15/08/23]*



- For the second year in succession, we have over 90 000 applications for undergraduate study at UCT.
- From a base of 63 000 five years ago.
- Strong interest in UCT as a desirable study destination.

HEMIS Data 2020-2022



	AFRICAN			COLOURED			INDIAN			WHITE		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
UG	5469	5963	5373	2446	2369	2172	998	954	817	334	97	245
PG	2487	2796	2382	1307	1375	1282	610	621	561	469	341	466
TOTAL	7956	8759	7755	3753	3744	3454	1608	1575	1378	803	438	711

	AFRICAN			COLOURED			INDIAN			WHITE		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
UG	32%	33%	30%	14%	13%	12%	6%	5%	5%	18%	15%	12%
PG	22%	24%	21%	11%	12%	11%	5%	5%	5%	21%	19%	17%
TOTAL	28%	30%	27%	13%	13%	12%	6%	5%	5%	19%	17%	14%

HEMIS Data 2020-2022



	INTERNATIONAL*			DID NOT DECLARE			TOTALS		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
UG	1305	1051	1119	3801	4876	6006	17063	17809	17741
PG	2311	2180	2544	2294	2397	2706	11384	11635	11474
TOTAL	3616	3231	3663	6095	7273	8712	28447	29444	29215

	INTERNATIONAL*			DID NOT DECLARE		
	2020	2021	2022	2020	2021	2022
UG	8%	6%	7%	22%	27%	34%
PG	20%	19%	22%	20%	21%	24%
TOTAL	13%	11%	13%	21%	25%	30%



Student performance: Graduates



Faculty	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 Mid Year
U/grad Diplomas	151	127	85	121	256	
3yr bachelor's degrees	1842	1936	1910	1853	1864	
Prof bachelor's degrees	1627	1507	1547	1382	1394	
Postgraduate Diplomas	1026	1175	988	1011	864	
Honours	1157	1187	1191	1104	1028	
Master's	1381	1302	1333	1337	1342	290
Doctors	195	261	276	274	280	107
Total	7379	7495	7330	7082	7028	

Despite the impact of COVID-19 on student progression manifesting in lower graduate numbers in '21/22, a very strong performance in Doctoral graduates with four successive years of 260+ doctorates awarded and a record high 280 in 2022 is noted. This year, 107 Doctoral and 290 Master's degrees have already been awarded.

Our researchers



OUR RESEARCHERS IN 2022

Academic⁶ career stages

Lecturer/
research officer

29%

Senior lecturer/
senior research
officer

27%

Associate
professor/ chief
research officer

20%

Professor/
principal
research officer

20%



Demographics

South African
academics

71%



Black South African
academics

34%



Female
academics

51%



NRF and research excellence



NRF-RATED RESEARCHERS⁴

NRF-rated UCT
researchers
453

A-rated UCT
researchers
32

P-rated UCT
researchers
8

NRF-rated researchers per faculty



NRF and research excellence



RESEARCH AREAS OF STRENGTH

SARChI Chairs

SARChI Chairs hosted at UCT in 2022	Percentage of national chairs hosted at UCT
38	18%

Faculty distribution of SARChI Chairs

Commerce **4**

Engineering & the Built Environment **7**

Health Sciences **9**

Humanities **4**

Law **2**

Science **12**

UCT-hosted Centres of Excellence

DSI/NRF Centres of Excellence

Birds as Keys to Biodiversity Conservation - Science	Catalysis c*change - Engineering & the Built Environment	DSI/NRF Centre of Excellence for Biomedical Tuberculosis Research - Health Sciences (node)
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African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) Centres of Excellence

African Centre of Excellence for Inequality Research (ACEIR) - Commerce	Centre of Excellence in Climate and Development (ARUA-CD) - Science
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Our research outputs



DHET-accredited publications

*Please note that the number for output titles, as well as the faculty journal units, is provisional data.

2021 publication count

Journal article units	Books and chapter units	Conference proceedings units	Total units
1 534.42	212.18	54.50	1 801.10

2021 total unique DHET-accredited titles*

Journals titles	Books and chapter titles	Conference proceedings titles
3 629	255	122

Journal publication units across faculties*

Faculty	2021
CHED	15.16
COM	106.69
EBE	170.49
HSC	750.99
HUM	98.99
LAW	50.67
SCI	359.41

Publication impact

Percentage of publications in the top 10% most cited publications worldwide

14.3%

(Source: Elsevier SciVal - year 2022 capture still incomplete)

Percentage of UCT publications with external co-authors³

83.6%

(69.0% have international co-authors and 14.6% have only national co-authors)

(Source: Elsevier SciVal - year 2022 capture still incomplete)

UCT has

3

influential researchers on both the 2021 and the 2022 Clarivate Analytics highly cited researcher listing for papers in the top 1% by citation.



Our research outputs



Creative outputs submitted to DHET for 2021

Design output units 0	Fine art and visual art output units 4	Music output units 1	Literary arts output units 1	Theatre, performance and dance output units 2
Total of creative output units submitted in 2021 8	Innovations category submissions 13			

Research degree outputs: research master's and PhDs

235
Research master's
qualifiers

244
PhD qualifiers

3 This refers to all UCT's publications in 2022 that have 1 or more co-authors from other SA institutions and/or from international institutions. International co-authored papers will include co-authors from SA institutions too. The papers with national co-authors are only those with 1 or more authors from SA institutions only!



Overview of the university's finances

Context

- Currently the university has a strong balance sheet with **total assets of R14bn** and **cash reserves of R1.2bn**
- Notwithstanding this, the university developed a comprehensive, **multi-year financial sustainability plan** in 2022 given the **financial challenges** that were anticipated
- Given the **declining top line** (fee income and government subsidies which have not kept up with inflation) as well as **increased financial aid** and a **higher than inflationary increases in the cost base**, a **budgeted deficit of R288m** was presented and approved by Council in respect of 2023
- Currently the university is projecting a further **negative variance to budget of cR30m** which is largely due to **lower than expected enrolment income** and **unanticipated expenditure** in respect of loadshedding, legal and other costs





Overview of the university's finances

Context (continued)

- Decline in the **block grant**. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has received a marginal 0.9% increase from the National Treasury. This has raised concerns as funded units within the sector are growing, potentially diluting their impact. This situation is further exacerbated for UCT due to a decrease in output funded units for 2023.
- UCT's approach to align **tuition fee** increments with inflation based on the Minister's recommendations has an impact on the tuition fee growth. Additionally, the effects of lower-than-budgeted enrolments from previous years have had a lingering impact. While this poses a multi-year challenge, the ongoing recovery of international student enrolments provides an avenue for an opportunity.





Overview of the university's finances

Challenges (cont.)

- Changes to the **NSFAS** funding model also raise concerns. Accommodation costs capped at **R45K** by NSFAS and funding alterations have implications for our financial aid commitments, particularly regarding residence fees. The impact of this in the 2023 budget is **R177 million** additional allocation by the university to financial aid.
- **Staff costs** constitutes a significant portion (**68%**) of expenditure. Despite financial pressures, UCT negotiated salary increases in line with sector benchmarks for 2023. While this places a strain on financial resources, it underscores our commitment to retaining talented staff and maintaining our academic excellence.





Overview of the university's finances

Planned actions

- Concerted implementation of the financial sustainability plan
- Focus on cash retention and preservation
- Develop comprehensive review of systems and operation in relation to items of income and expenditure, including lower enrolment and fee income, staff costs, procurement and properties and services
- Review policies to align to our current circumstances to mitigate financial risk
- Enhance governance in relation to accountability



Overview of the university's finances

Opportunities – financial sustainability implementation

Reviewing systems and operations for efficiency to achieve the following:

- **Optimised Infrastructure:** From classroom scheduling to facilities management, efficient operations can help optimise the use of physical spaces and resources on campus.
- **Compliance and Accountability:** this will be key to ensure that the university meets the regulatory requirements. Efficient systems make it easier to track and report on compliance, ensuring that the institution meets legal and accreditation standards.



Overview of the university's finances

Opportunities – financial sustainability implementation(continued)

Reviewing our systems and operations for efficiency to achieve the following:

- **Resource Optimisation:** By analysing systems and operations, identify redundancies, eliminate waste, and allocate resources more effectively. This will result in cost savings and improved resource allocations for various academic and administrative functions.
- **Enhanced Student Experience:** Improved operations will lead to a better experience for students. Processes like course registration, grading, and administrative services can be streamlined, making it easier for students to navigate university procedures.



Overview of the university's finances

Opportunities – financial sustainability implementation (continued)

- **Improving throughput:** This will include providing academic support programmes, mentorship initiatives and identifying and addressing barriers to academic success
- **Expanding on core business:** Exploring opportunities that includes developing online short learning programmes, offering part time and online higher certificates and diplomas and considering micro-credentials offerings
- **Improve debt collection:** Implement robust systems to ensure to ensure timely and efficient collection of debts.
- **Diversify revenue streams:** Through donor fundings, investing in businesses that will support the core mandate of the university and collaborating with private sectors





Overview of the university's finances

Despite the significant financial challenges, reflected in the projected budget deficit of over R300m for 2023, Council is committed to improving the financial outcome of the University in a comprehensive and sustainable manner. Through this approach we are targeting a decrease in the annual deficit and a return to a surplus position over the next 5 years. In the imminent months, our key focus shall be on concerted implementation of a detailed multi-year plan to achieve this.