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## **Multi-year support for students at UCT's Disability Service**

UCT is committed to ensuring that students with disability who come to the university are treated with dignity and respect and provided with the best possible conditions to ensure that they are successful. Our policy is that no student will be denied admission purely on account of the nature of their disability.

Towards achieving these objectives, the UCT Disability Service (DS) was established in 1988. The primary purpose of the Disability Service is to ensure that students have access to all aspects of teaching and learning. At a very basic level this means that students must be able to:

- get onto campus
- get into their classrooms, and
- access the content and interactions of lectures or seminars, and the learning materials related to their studies.

The DS works within the university structures towards the removal of any physical, policy, information and attitudinal barriers that might prevent students and staff from fulfilling their potential. It provides advice and support both in terms of harnessing mainstream capabilities for the accommodation of people with disabilities, as well as providing specialist services where mainstreaming is not possible.

Since its establishment, the DS has grown extensively in providing support to a large number of students with different disabilities. The range of services required has also increased over the years, leading it to implement a service model that currently operates in a customized manner to ensure that students and staff receive an optimal level of support throughout their university careers. Support is tailored to the precise needs of every student who registers at the university. This often entails face-to-face or other direct interactions with members of the Disability Service team.

With limited budgets, resourcing of the DS has always been a challenge. UCT is therefore very pleased to announce that the FNB Fund has recently committed funding of R11 million towards UCT's Disability Service. The funding will be used to enhance the range of support services that the DS is able to offer to students with disabilities, including an allocation for bursaries and sign language interpreters.

While the DS has achieved much success in providing greater access to university for students and staff with disabilities, there was a clear need for external funding to supplement what the university is able to provide to allow the service to continue operating in a manner that meets the growing needs of students with disabilities.

In addition to its support of the Disability Service, the FNB Fund has donated a further R4 million to UCT for other bursaries, and in December last year, granted R10 million to the University for emergency support.

Executive Director of the Development and Alumni Department Dr Russell Ally expressed the University's gratitude to the FNB Fund for partnering with UCT to ensure the sustainability and ongoing development of the Disability Services model we have created to address one of our most critical needs and help to create a more inclusive and accessible campus environment for students with disabilities.

**Ends**

***Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department***

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