



Communication and Marketing Department  
Isebe loThungelwano neNtengiso  
Kommunikasie en Bemerkingsdepartement

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa  
Welgelegen House, Chapel Road Extension, Rosebank, Cape Town  
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 5427/5428/5674 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 5628

[www.uct.ac.za](http://www.uct.ac.za)

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## UCT trailblazer scientist appointed chief editor of medicinal chemistry journal – a first for Africa



Prof Kelly Chibale.

Photo: Je'nine May

Professor Kelly Chibale, the University of Cape Town's (UCT) Neville Isdell Chair in African-centric Drug Discovery and Development, has made history: he is the first editor-in-chief from Africa of an American Chemical Society (ACS) publication.

Chibale will assume the role of editor-in-chief of the *ACS Medicinal Chemistry Letters* journal in January 2023. He will replace Dennis C Liotta, the founding editor-in-chief since the journal was launched in 2010.

He is currently an associate editor of the *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry* and an editorial advisory board member for *ACS Medicinal Chemistry Letters*, *ACS Infectious Diseases*, *Accounts of Chemical Research* and *ACS Bio & Med Chem Au*.

*ACS Medicinal Chemistry Letters* focuses on a broad range of subject matter, including compound design and optimisation, biological evaluation, drug delivery, imaging agents, and pharmacology of both small and large bioactive molecules.

Chibale said he is looking forward to the task. "It is an excellent opportunity for me to serve the drug discovery community and contribute to shaping the field. I plan to embrace continuity and change by sustaining what is excellent in current practices of the journal and being an agent of change towards building a globally diverse and inclusive community, with a soft spot for early-career researchers," he said.

"My appointment is significant for the continent of Africa, African science and UCT's Vision 2030 as the associated international visibility will ensure access to major advances in the field of biomedical research.

"These are critically important for the development of our continent. It will also provide a significant boost to drug discovery research in Africa and provide the world with a glimpse of Africa's capability to lead international efforts in shaping the future direction of a scientific field."

Chibale has a long history of innovation and stands tall among African scientists. He is the founder and director of the UCT Holistic Drug Discovery and Development Centre (H3D), the South Africa Research Chair in Drug Discovery at UCT, and the founding director of the South African Medical Research Council/Drug Discovery and Development Research Unit at UCT's Department of Chemistry and Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine.

James Milne, the president of ACS Publications said, "We're thrilled he chose ACS. Aside from numerous awards and honours, including being named one of *Fortune* magazine's 2018 world's 50 greatest leaders, Chibale has been an active ACS member since 1994, underscoring his commitment to ACS and our shared mission."

From his perspective, Chibale said he has a vested interest in pushing the frontiers of medicinal chemistry. "I will bring prominence to tropical and neglected diseases and will be a role model for underrepresented minority groups, which can, in turn, potentially attract minority groups to the journal."

*Story by Helen Swingler, UCT News.*

***ENDS***

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

**Ridovhona Mbulaheni**

Media Liaison Assistant  
Communication and Marketing Department  
University of Cape Town  
Rondebosch  
Tel: (021) 650 2333  
Cell: (064) 905 3807  
Email: [ridovhona.mbulaheni@uct.ac.za](mailto:ridovhona.mbulaheni@uct.ac.za)  
Website: [www.uct.ac.za](http://www.uct.ac.za)