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## **UCT intensifying efforts in the fight against gender-based violence**

In celebration of UCT Day on Friday, 6 October, the University of Cape Town (UCT) intends to show further commitment to support more survivors of gender-based violence (GBV).

UCT Day is an opportunity for alumni, staff and students to demonstrate collective commitment to the university's fundraising efforts intended to support four student initiatives, which include GBV programmes. Members of the public can also make an [online donation](#) to any of the four causes – with the other three initiatives being around student fees, student wellness and UCT food sovereignty.

As part of the commitment to the fight against GBV, the university aims to extend counselling sessions to reach more student survivors of GBV. This is estimated to require an additional R1 million over the next three years.

Dr Sianne Alves, director of the UCT Office for Inclusivity and Change (OIC), said: "During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a marked increase in GBV reported in South Africa, including at UCT. The damaging emotional and psychological effects of GBV can negatively affect students' lives in many ways, including their academic performance and the quality of their social interactions. It can also result in students needing to take a leave of absence from their studies or even dropping out of university. If unsupported, students can carry this trauma beyond their studies."

A donation of R5 120 will provide eight counselling sessions for one survivor, R25 600 will provide 40 sessions for five survivors, and R200 000 will provide 333 counselling sessions for 42 survivors.

UCT GBV response and support take various forms. It can be a survivor care pack – which affords a survivor dignity post-trauma; or it may be transport to court; emergency evacuation and temporary placement in accommodation while permanent accommodation is located; and human support during justice-seeking processes and psychological services.

"Donations towards GBV are dedicated to the wellbeing of the survivor and their healing journey," said Alves, adding that UCT is one of a few universities that support a survivor, regardless of where the incident occurred.

“Every single survivor that reports to us at the OIC is supported. We are led by the agency of the survivor and we always work at the pace of the survivor,” she said.

As part of the UCT Day activities, the university intends raising more funds towards GBV support programmes.

The UCT Day programme will see a variety of events on campus on Friday, 6 October, starting at 12:00. Events include live music by the UCT Radio; a Zumba session at 12:00; the UCT executive challenge at 15:30, featuring members of the senior leadership team who will compete in a relay race; wheelchair rugby; and an outdoor movie experience hosted by Sunshine Cinema from 18:00 to 20:00.

There is also a planned three sports challenges and teams drawn from across the university will battle against each other. These are 5km walkathon; five-a-side soccer and the UCT Amazing Race powered by BMW.

On the day, the UCT Libraries will host tours at 12:00, 13:00 and 14:00 in the Jagger Library and Birkdale House; and the UCT Campus Sustainability Guided Walking Tours on 5 and 6 October from 12:00 to 13:30.

- [Visit the UCT Day events page for the full schedule of exciting activities.](#)
- [Support the UCT Day student fundraising initiatives.](#)

***ENDS***

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

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