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## **UCT receives ‘single largest donation ever’ of \$21.5m from Atlantic Philanthropies**

### **Funding enables launch of proposed Nelson Mandela Memorial Centre**

The University of Cape Town (UCT) has received a generous grant of US \$21.5 million from [Atlantic Philanthropies](#), which has enabled the construction of the proposed Nelson Mandela Memorial Centre and [School of Public Governance](#).

Launched on Friday, 17 May 2024, the construction of the centre will be made possible through the funding by Atlantic Philanthropies, as well as generous grants and pledges from a range of donors and alumni.

UCT Vice-Chancellor *interim* Emeritus Professor Daya Reddy said: “The Atlantic Philanthropies grant represents the largest single donation ever received by UCT and is a testament to the vision and impact of the project.”

Conceptualised to honour the legacy of the late President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, this iconic building will be a living memorial to emulate his leadership in the best way possible: by building a new generation of ethical leaders.

Professor Reddy explained: “The proposal is to build a new home for UCT’s Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance, and to create a vibrant convening space located within a memorial centre curated with the Nelson Mandela Foundation. The Nelson Mandela Memorial Centre and School of Public Governance will serve emerging leaders from across the African continent.”

The precinct, which will be designed through an architectural design competition, will offer interactive public art installations, contemplative walkways, and meeting areas designed to facilitate catharsis, reflection and spiritual resonance; and provide for reflection on the life and times of Nelson Mandela.

This partnership with the Nelson Mandela Foundation aligns with UCT's [Vision 2030](#), a vision that extends beyond South Africa to embrace the entire continent and the world at large.

The Director of the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance, Professor Faizel Ismail, emphasised the school's commitment to building the capacity of the next generation of African leaders. This leadership must draw on the legacy of the late Nelson Mandela and reflect the values of ubuntu while building the resilience of democratic institutions and transforming our economies to create a prosperous Africa in the 21st Century. It is therefore apt to mark this moment in UCT's history during Africa Month.

Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, Verne Harris, said: "UCT has many historical links with Nelson Mandela and with his family members. It is appropriate that a Memorial Centre associated with his name be hosted by the university, especially in association with a school dedicated to nurturing the kind of leadership which humanity needs if we are to surmount the challenges confronting us."

The centre will be located at the southwestern corner of UCT's upper campus. This iconic setting offers an exciting opportunity to rehabilitate the landscape scarred by the devastating fire of April 2021, greatly enhancing the upper reaches of campus, and re-connecting campus to the mountainside above it. The deliberate spatial juxtaposition with the adjacent Rhodes Memorial will invite dialogue and reflection on the respective roles and disparate legacies of Rhodes and Mandela.

- [Watch the Nelson Mandela Memorial Centre and School of Public Governance site video.](#)
- [Listen to a short audio version.](#)

While the statutory processes to realise this iconic project are still underway by a team of dedicated professionals, Professor Reddy invited UCT staff, alumni and students to celebrate this momentous occasion and to support the proposed Nelson Mandela Memorial Centre and School of Public Governance "as we work together to uphold Madiba's vision of justice, freedom and human dignity."

***ENDS***

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

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