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5 November 2024

UCT to host celebratory event for newly qualified teachers

Event takes place amid impending job cuts by the Western Cape Education Department

The University of Cape Town's (UCT) [Newly Qualified Teachers \(NQT\) Project](#) will host a celebratory event on Tuesday, 12 November 2024 for this year's cohort of novice teachers and NQT alumni who have completed the mentoring course.

The NQT Project is an initiative of the UCT's [School of Education](#) in partnership with the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and is funded by Hosken Consolidated Investments (HCI) and the Saville Foundation. The NQT Project provides essential support for young teachers who have entered the classroom for the first time. The project focuses on developing their professional resilience and provides them with the academic and psychosocial support they need to navigate their first year in the field.

Judith Sacks, the manager of the NQT Project, stated: "Completing their first year in the classroom is a significant milestone for NQTs. This first year is often described as a roller coaster, as NQTs are expected to perform the same duties as experienced teachers right from day one. The workload can be overwhelming; factors such as class size and the various demands of preparation, assessment, administration and pastoral care can be shocking for novice teachers. Many new teachers realise only when they start their first job that being an educator involves much more than simply teaching."

This year's NQT celebration is hosted in the midst of uncertainty. The Western Cape Education Department has announced a reduction in teacher posts for the 2025 school year due to a budget shortfall. The temporary teacher contracts that expire in December will not be renewed.

"The impending job cuts are significantly impacting our new teachers. This includes both those whose contracts are not being renewed and those who will see their workloads increase substantially because of the budget cuts. Many of our teachers are the breadwinners in their families, as well as for their extended families. Over the past few months, numerous NQTs have experienced intense anxiety and stress regarding their futures. It was alarming to see how many NQTs, in their final submissions, are considering leaving the profession or moving abroad to teach. While this issue may not be the main focus, it will be at the forefront for many as the year comes to an end," said Sacks.

Despite the challenges and insecurity, Sacks said that many NQTs connect with their students and go above and beyond the demanding workload to provide even more support to their students in various academic and extra-curricular ways.

“We are looking forward to welcoming friends, family and colleagues to the Neville Alexander Building to celebrate these agentic and resilient novice teachers as they reach the end of their first year in schools.”

Ntombozuko Mavikela, the recipient of [UCT's 2024 Stella Clark Teachers' Award](#), will be the guest speaker.

Date: Tuesday, 12 November 2024

Time: 16:30 – 18:00 SAST

Venue: School of Education, Neville Alexander Building, Studio 2

Members of the media wishing to attend the event are requested to [RSVP](#).

ENDS

Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

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