

27 April 2021	The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU	THE
From Jeff James		NATIONAL
		ARCHIVES

Sent via-e-mail to: vc@uct.ac.za

Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng
Vice-Chancellor
University of Cape Town
Private Bag X3
Rondebosch 7701
South Africa

Dear Professor Phakeng

I write on behalf of everyone at The National Archives (UK), to offer our sincere sympathy regarding the recent Table Mountain Fire and the devastation suffered by the University of Cape Town and its communities.

All of my team were deeply shocked and saddened to see the news of the fire and, although we are not acquainted personally, as members of an international community sharing responsibility for scholarship and access to historical manuscripts and collections, we want you to know that we are thinking of you and your team at this difficult time.

As Keeper of the UK National Archives and custodian of its historic collections, I can only imagine the sense of shock and loss that your colleagues, students and indeed the wider community must be feeling. Through our collections I have seen first-hand the ways in which historic collections and archival materials such as those of the Jagger Library, carry with them the priceless memory of place, people and nation and their loss therefore is a loss to us all.


Through news reports, I have understood that the picture may not be entirely bleak, and that the actions of your teams and the fire and rescue responders may have saved important collections. I hope that this is so.

On behalf of everyone at The National Archives, I wish you well in your efforts to rebuild and restore and, as current President of the Forum of National Archivists, I

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know that this sentiment will be shared by our peer national archives around the world. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you feel that we can be of any assistance in this effort.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. James". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jeff James
Chief Executive and Keeper
The National Archives (UK)

