



Alumni in Action

Supporting Survivors of Gender-Based Violence at UCT

The Development and Alumni Department is working hand in hand with the Alumni in Action project to raise funds to provide counselling for student survivors of gender-based violence.

The Challenge

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a marked increase in gender-based violence (GBV) reported in South Africa, including at the University of Cape Town (UCT). This escalation takes place at a time that the tragic rape and murder of UCT student Uyinene Mrwetyana is still fresh in our minds.

The damaging emotional and psychological effect of gender-based violence 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.

'For too long, gender-based violence has been allowed to run rampant, cutting women down physically and psychologically so that they never reach their potential. It's a huge indictment on our society – and a massive loss.

With the proper care and resources, we can help survivors rebuild their lives.'

*Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng
Vice Chancellor, UCT*

Thousands of students, staff and other supporters filled the Sarah Baartman Plaza at the memorial service for UCT student Uyinene Mrwetyana, raped and murdered in August 2019

UCT News, 4 September 2019





‘The need for an expanded student counselling service is urgent.’

Dr Sianne Alves, Director, UCT Office of Inclusivity and Change



The Solution

Alumni in Action is a new campaign to assist survivors of GBV at UCT.

This campaign is built around the understanding that survivors of GBV require dedicated support over an extended period to help them rebuild their capacity and agency after trauma.

UCT has already invested resources to ensure that it can provide quality counselling services for students. This alumni-supported project will provide survivors of GBV with significantly expanded student counselling services over and above existing services that are available on campus.

Alumni in Action was conceived by UCT alumna, Zella Fuphe through discussions with current UCT student, Sanda Nyoka. Zella has pledged personal funds to support 200 sessions for the first-phase rollout of this exciting project.

This campaign also enjoys enthusiastic endorsement from UCT’s Vice Chancellor, Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng.

Combined with generous donations already received from the Mauerberger Foundation Fund (CAD 10,000), Eversheds Sutherland (CAD1,000/month) and a number of our alumni living in the United Kingdom, we are now able to initiate our new service for just over 45 students.



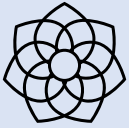
‘This project speaks to our humanity. It speaks to us seeing someone in need and not leaving them behind.’

Zella Fuphe

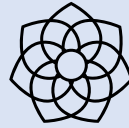
UCT alumna and initiator of the Alumni in Action campaign



Our Services Provide Vital Support to Survivors



42 of 47 UCT survivors reporting GBV over April–June this year used the specialist counselling and support provided by the Office of Inclusivity (OIC).



There is increasing uptake of the survivor-centred peer group coordinated by the OIC.

Our Fundraising Target

Our target is to provide extended counselling sessions to at least **180** students who are survivors of GBV. The total amount we seek to raise to ensure they can access this service over the coming three years is **CAD 100,000** (R1 000 000).

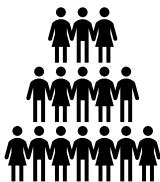
We are now inviting UCT alumni, their workplaces and the corporate sector across South Africa to join us in raising the additional funds we need to sustain this new initiative.



CAD520 will provide 8 sessions for 1 survivor



CAD2,560 will provide 40 sessions for 5 survivors



CAD20,000 will provide 333 counselling sessions for 42 survivors

‘UCT alumni can take the lead in putting thought into action by standing up against gender-based violence. As an alumni community working together, we can change the course of a young person’s life.’

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