

UCT GSB

ALUMNI REUNION WEEKEND

23-25 OCTOBER 2020





"The vitality and relevance of a business school depends on the passion and commitment of its alumni."

Morea Josias

THANK YOU

for attending the 2020 Alumni Reunion Weekend. We are pleased that the event was able to take place in what has been a challenging year in so many respects, and are proud that the weekend was enthusiastically attended.

The vitality and relevance of a business school depends on the passion and commitment of its alumni. Your continued engagement with the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business (UCT GSB) is our lifeblood. We hope you found the Alumni Reunion Weekend stimulating, entertaining and inspirational.

We compiled this short brochure to remind you of some of the highlights of the weekend, and trust that you will join us at the 2021 Alumni Reunion Weekend.

Best wishes,

Morea Josias
Head: Alumni & Career Services



DR CATHERINE DUGGAN

DOING BUSINESS IN AFRICA

The UCT GSB’s newly appointed Director, Dr Catherine Duggan, made it clear that anyone who passed through its doors should emerge genuinely transformed and edified by the experience. The School, she emphasised, changes not only the trajectory of people’s careers, but the course of their lives.

Dr Duggan explained that the UCT GSB has been at the forefront of navigating uncertainty and socioeconomic volatility, so the challenge of the pandemic also presents an opportunity for the School to position itself as a thought and conversation leader in this field.

It is important for alumni of the UCT GSB to have a sense of impact beyond their careers, she emphasised, and one way they can achieve this is to identify and recommend students who would benefit from the UCT GSB’s transformative experience – particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The experiences of such students would have far-reaching effects.

The greatest satisfaction in life, she added, is not a fancy car or the corner office, but having an impact on young lives. Through the UCT GSB, every alumnus has the opportunity to do just that.

“I want to ensure we’re an African business school that not only speaks to South Africa and the African continent, but that builds a bridge between Africa and the rest of the world. I want us to tell the real story of African business, which is very different from what you see on CNN. It’s the story that so many of you, the UCT GSB alumni, live every day, and have had a part to play in building. All of us in this community are here because we fundamentally believe we have something to contribute to the continent and the world, and this is the community that I want to ensure we are growing, building, and honouring.”

**UCT GSB Director
Dr Catherine Duggan**

IN YOUR VERY FIRST ADDRESS TO THE UCT GSB, YOU NAMED THREE THINGS YOU WOULD LIKE TO INSTIL IN US: RESPECT, CARE AND INQUISITIVENESS. CAN YOU REITERATE?

CD: We need to have staff and leadership and people at all levels of the organisation care about one another. We need to create a community of like-minded people who are working together toward the same goal. But at the same time we must respect one another.

We are lifelong learners. It’s so important as a community of alumni that you’re learning all the time, and that you are teaching us.

We are teaching and learning all the time, and together we need to take young people who are in programmes like the ones that we offer at the UCT GSB and collaborate in teaching them.

What I really like about the idea of a business school is that we not only teach others, but we can be a case study ourselves.

And so, as we think about responding to change, one of the things we can do is to start by ensuring that inside the walls of the UCT GSB, we take care of one another, respect one another, and we remain curious and inquisitive.

We must recognise the challenges this creates and also recognise the fact that it isn’t easy – we have to work at it. But the experience of working at it within the UCT GSB – and within the broader UCT GSB community – gives us the insight that allows us to take what we know into other organisations and to say to them: “Look, we know it’s not going to be easy to create a more sustainable and more inclusive organisation, but we know it’s possible, because we’ve done it. Here’s how we did it. And here’s how you can do it too.”



BRIEF CV: CATHERINE DUGGAN

Dr Duggan is Director of the UCT Graduate School of Business. She was previously Professor of Management and Political Economy and Vice Dean for Strategy and Research at the ALU School of Business in Rwanda. Prior to joining ALU, she was a professor at Harvard Business School (HBS) for nearly a decade, teaching courses on political economy and leadership to MBA students and executives. Dr Duggan received her PhD in Political Science from Stanford University, where she was the G.J. Lieberman Fellow for the Social Sciences.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE ALUMNI BOARD

FELLOW ALUMNI,

This year's annual reunion was certainly one for the history books. Understandably, the COVID-19 pandemic made gathering in person impossible, but the UCT GSB staff are to be commended for their effort in organising an alternative event online.

What a luxury to sit in the comfort of one's home, while enjoying the finest intellectual stimulation on offer.

But while a virtual reunion is certainly better than no reunion at all, and despite the highly informative speakers we had the good fortune to listen to, we nevertheless missed out on the raison d'être of alumni reunions – networking.

With that in mind, and with a sense of optimism in our collective conquest of this pandemic, it is my hope that next year's reunion will once again take place in person, so that we may continue to engage in the timeless activity of forging new relationships, and rekindling old friendships.

Until then, if you'd like to help the UCT GSB but don't know how, you can start with something really simple, by heading to www.gsbfoundation.org.za and clicking on the big red button on the top right; it says "Donate now" and you can't miss it.

Of course, before you start donating, be sure to read the rest of the website content to learn about the foundation's mission, its protected structure, and how the proceeds add value to our school.

And as it's still early in the new year, I'd like to use this opportunity to wish you all the best for the journey ahead.

Kosta Kontos
MBA 2009-10
UCT GSB Alumni Board Chairperson

"It is my hope that next year's reunion will once again take place in person, so that we can continue to engage in the timeless activity of forging new relationships and rekindling old friendships."

Kosta Kontos



DONATE NOW

OUR HOSTS FOR THE WEEKEND



MARK GRAHAM

Mark Graham is an Associate Professor at UCT's Graduate School of Business. He is a former Head of the College of Accounting at the University of Cape Town where he still convenes the MCom specialising in Financial Reporting, Analysis and Governance. He teaches on the MBA, EMBA and various executive programmes at UCT's Graduate School of Business. In his spare time he rides his mountain bike, bird-watches and spends time in the Southern African bush.

ARIELLA KUPER

A graduate from the full-time class of the MBA, these days Ariella Kuper auctions arrested oil tankers for the High Court, “as most women do on a Saturday morning”, she quips. In 2009 Kuper was awarded the Director's Alumni Award for her passion and support for the UCT GSB. Her words of advice are a fitting mantra for the events of this past year: “Never waste a good crisis.”



HUGH CORDER

FAREWELL FROM HUGH CORDER

When Prof. Hugh Corder accepted the position of UCT GSB's Interim Director, he hadn't expected to be doing so "through a laptop" he said wryly, before paying tribute to the directors and interim directors who came before him, and wishing his permanent successor Dr Catherine Duggan all the best.



"What I brought with me was not so much my law background, but a very strong knowledge of how to manage within the University of Cape Town. During my eight months, I attempted to put a stability, a predictability, an openness and an accountability in place... I had an enormously wonderful eight months at UCT GSB, with very positive responses from the vast majority of its employees. If I was to be asked what I'd be most proud of from a management point of view, I'd say the best achievement was to put in place a new senior managerial structure within the UCT GSB."

Professor Hugh Corder
former Interim Director
UCT GSB

BRIEF CV

Hugh Corder is a graduate of UCT, Cambridge and Oxford universities. He was a professor at the Law School at UCT and a prolific writer of books and articles. In 1993 Prof. Corder helped to write South Africa's transitional Bill of Rights. He has a passionate commitment to South Africa, to thinking about human rights and public law, and to transmitting those lessons around the world.

A MESSAGE FROM THE UCT GSB FOUNDATION

The UCT GSB Foundation was started six years ago by alumni of the class of 1969 – Stewart Cohen, Peter Thorrington Smith, Tiger Wessels and Ian Kantor. In a brief address, Cohen outlined the key objectives

of the Foundation:

- Give bursaries to disadvantaged students
- Help with faculty
- Help with facilities
- Fund research

So far, the Foundation has raised R50 million, and aims to establish an endowment to raise R500 million, with the focus being on sustainability. Cohen also welcomed new UCT GSB Director Dr Catherine Duggan and appealed to the alumni for their support.

"We want you to give from your heart to a school that has had a life-changing effect on you. What matters is that you're giving back. Every MBA graduate should, during his or her working career, give back to the school enough for one student to get an MBA."

Stewart Cohen

**CLICK HERE TO VISIT THE UCT GSB FOUNDATION'S
WEBSITE AND DONATE OR GET INVOLVED.**



THULI MADONSELA

TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Former Public Protector Professor Thuli Madonsela on the role of technology in a paradoxically connected and divided world.

Displaying the warm and calm demeanour we have grown to admire, former Public Protector Thuli Madonsela reminded us that she was part of our “academic tribe” courtesy of her honorary doctorate from UCT. Speaking on

the relationship of technology to both corruption and social justice, she pointed out the double-edged nature of social media, which has the power to unite and organise – as seen in the Arab Spring – but at the same time amplify divisive ideas.

Technology has enabled us to expose corruption, but also to spread disinformation, she pointed out. Prof. Madonsela experienced this first hand when she was accused of being a spy.

She addressed the challenge of extreme inequality, and how technology can help overcome this, especially during a pandemic. Tech, she said, has the power to democratise information as well as fair, equitable distribution of opportunities. But policy is futile without proper execution, data analysis, accountability and justice.

“Never before has the world been this connected, yet never before has it been so divided... the coronavirus disruption, particularly through lockdown responses to it, has highlighted and heightened both our connected and our divided world.”

Professor Thuli Madonsela

Q: HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE FUTURE?

TM: The future depends on what me, you and everyone else is going to do about it. But from where I’m sitting, we’ve turned the corner. I was just thinking about when I spoke at a conference like this about the possibility of giving amnesty to some of the people involved in state capture and other forms of corruption. And people pushed back: no.

People have had enough of impunity. They want the right thing when it comes to social justice. All over the world, they’re going to the streets when they feel democracy is not giving them their share. And some governments are listening. I’ve seen our own government listen when many organisations pushed back on the issue of the basic income grant or the temporary income grant.

I’m hoping governments are going to take this moment of crisis as an opportunity to do better, but I’m also hoping that me, you and everyone else will use entrepreneurship and community-building to build more resilient families and communities, so that in the future we’re not going to leave this to government.

On the issue of being connected, I think we’ve realised that we get divided, particularly by innovative technologies. The movie *The Social Dilemma* is a good example, [but] better, because [at the time] we didn’t know about the negative impact of these technologies. Now we do. And it seems we’re coming together to review what has happened. We reset our pathways and rebuild with an understanding that no one should be left behind.



BRIEF CV: THULI MADONSELA

Professor Thuli Madonsela is the former Public Protector of South Africa, former full-time Law Commissioner and current Law Faculty Trust Chair in Social Justice, University of Stellenbosch and founder of the Thuma Foundation for Democracy Leadership and Literacy. As one of the drafters of South Africa’s Constitution, Prof. Madonsela currently teaches constitutional law, administrative law, social justice law and democracy and has written and published extensively on these matters.



VUSI THEMBEKWAYO

LEADING IN A TIME OF CHAOS

Venture capitalist, author and global speaker Vusi Thembekwayo began his talk with a dramatic invocation of the circumstances leading up to 9/11 to illustrate that international best practice isn't enough to navigate in uncertain times. Many of our problems, he went on, come from trying to solve current challenges using outdated methods, which results in us being stuck in zero-sum thinking.

Thembekwayo left us with three points to ponder:

1. Leaders shouldn't need a crisis to force them into innovation. Capital deployment needs new systems and ways of thinking, and our institutions are sophisticated enough to allow that to happen.
2. Business needs to engage with the public sphere in order to make itself relevant and impactful.
3. We are actually living in a Golden Age in the history of our species – so let's make the most of it!

Q: WHAT IS YOUR VIEW ABOUT QUIET DIPLOMACY AMONG PUBLIC SERVANTS, AND THE PERSECUTION WHEN THEY DO SPEAK UP?

VT: The broader question is, does our society have a social safety net for whistleblowers? I'm going to argue that it does not. And maybe that's the work we need to do.

How do we create a social security system for whistleblowers? Because we can't ask people to have the courage of their convictions and to follow their sense of ethics and morality and yet at the same time say, "Well, you know, things go pear-shaped. You're on your own, Jack".

We are in that moment in time when we have the responsibility to educate ourselves about the things around us – especially for those of us in the conversation who are leaders, and who want to see things go forward.

It's not about keeping quiet. It's about making sure you're informed about the thing you're talking about.

"When the world no longer mirrors our training, we're quite reluctant to shift and make those changes."

Vusi Thembekwayo



BRIEF CV: VUSI THEMBEKWAYO

Vusi Thembekwayo doesn't just talk business, he lives it. He has been the catalyst for change in businesses across the globe thanks to his expertise in strategy, leadership and sales. At the age of 25 he ran a R400 million division in a R17 billion multinational and today is widely regarded as one of the most disruptive forces in venture capital in Africa.

He was among the youngest directors of a listed company in South Africa and now serves on several boards. Currently, he is the CEO of a boutique investment and advisory firm in Africa.

PILOTING FLYSAFAIR THROUGH THE COVID-19 STORM

Kirby Gordon, Chief Marketing Officer at FlySafair, painted a dramatic picture of an airline preparing for lockdown. He mesmerised the audience with a brief history of the low-cost airline, from nature conservation, to Antarctic landings, and humanitarian aid parcel drops – and how that airline grew from two aircraft flying one route to being an award-winning business recognised by the industry as the most punctual airline in the world. But the philosophical twist in the tale of FlySafair was that all the success had not prepared the company to face serious adversity, never mind the cataclysmic adversity posed by lockdown.

Gordon spoke about the myriad issues and dilemmas the airline faced – and how the difficult decisions demanded by the crisis forced the company to focus on an ethical culture.

In the end, FlySafair came through the crisis stronger than ever, having learnt lessons on how frequent, open and honest conversation builds trust.

Trust is a cornerstone of the aviation industry. It was this – the relentless pursuit of trust – that allowed SA's best airline to weather the storm and emerge having been taught lessons in a way that years of success would not have been able to do.

Q: WHAT IS HAPPENING TO KULULA AND ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT A NEW RIVAL? COULD THE PUBLIC SECTOR (SAA) CREATE UNFORESEEN CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES?

KG: We need a healthy competition in this space; we need to be kept honest and true. We need to make sure the pricing is efficient, and we need to ensure there's enough capacity in the market to serve the demand that's there. What's going to happen now is that unless some competitors start to come in and contest the market, we're going to see a supply constraint. And that's not going to be good for anyone.

With regard to the state carrier, in an industry where you've got listed entity, a private entity and a parastatal, it's only ever going to be a commercial soap opera.

The truth is that there's been unfair capital injected into those competitors for years now. And as much as it frustrates us, we have to rely on the structures that are in place. We need to rely on the anti-competitive legislation in South Africa, make sure that we're vociferous about what's going on and ensure that the playing field remains there.

"Both success and failure are written in ice and then tomorrow, the sun will shine. We choose to accept that each day is a new challenge and that if you delay any flight, you are 100% delayed for those passengers in that moment – no matter how great you were yesterday."

Kirby Gordon



BRIEF CV: KIRBY GORDON

Kirby Gordon is Chief Marketing Officer and a non-executive board member at FlySafair, having previously held senior marketing roles at Kalahari.com and Sanlam. He has a deep passion for using technology to drive efficiency in business while innovating for great customer and employee experience. Gordon gained an MBA in 2010 at the UCT Graduate School of Business and spent a further three months at the Kellogg School of Management as part of the UCT GSB's exchange programme.

DISCONNECTED IN A CONNECTED WORLD

An animated Professor 'Rija' started his talk with a plea for introspection, reflection and imagination. He stressed the importance of ideation in the need for relevance, and how fleeting relevance can be in a constantly changing environment. In order for leaders to remain relevant, they have to anchor their thoughts and actions in the "why" – the fundamental reason for their actions – but they then need to balance this ideal with accountability for the results of these actions, he said.

Echoing some of Thuli Madonsela and Vusi Thembekwayo's thoughts, Prof. Rija pointed out that biases hinder our ability to execute new ways of being in an ever-changing world. Hence leaders must always have the courage to question their own paradigms. The importance of self-awareness for effective leadership is beyond just ideological or ethical correctness – it is what will root us to relevant change. The pandemic did not create the changes we now see, it merely accelerated them.



"It's not just about gaining insight. It's also about getting foresight. As leaders, we are not just here to respond, we are here to shape and influence."

Rasoava Rijamampianina



BRIEF CV: PROF. RASOAVA RIJAMAMPIANINA

Professor Rasoava Rijamampianina is an international visiting faculty member at leading institutions in Africa, Asia and Europe. Previously, he held various leadership and directorship positions, including Academic directorship of the Senior Executive Programme for Southern Africa, a joint initiative of Wits Business School (WBS) and Harvard Business School, and the Management Advancement Programmes at WBS.



LAST WORD

FROM CATHERINE DUGGAN

The UCT GSB's Director set
us one final challenge:

“I will challenge you to go home and ask yourself: how do I incorporate these learnings into my life? How do I learn all the time? Some of us are learning all the time, but we don't necessarily make time to reflect. If we can all go home and reflect on what we've learnt, and we can 'do' based on what we've learnt inside our houses, inside our neighbourhoods, inside our communities, in Cape Town, in South Africa, in Africa and in the world, then we can come together as the UCT GSB community with those reflections, with that inspiration, with those ideas about change. And we can build not just the best business school in Cape Town, or in South Africa, or in Africa, but in the world. We can build a business school that we are all incredibly proud to be a part of.”

UCT GSB

PLEASE DIARISE THESE EVENTS FOR 2021:

FEBRUARY

18 17:00-18:15 DIRECTOR'S MASTERCLASS

MARCH

18 17:00-18:00 ALUMNI INDUSTRY

25 17:00-18:15 DIRECTOR'S MASTERCLASS

30 17:00-18:00 GSB LIFELONG LEARNING

APRIL

22 17:00-18:15 DIRECTOR'S MASTERCLASS

MAY

13 17:00-18:00 ALUMNI INDUSTRY

LEADERSHIP LECTURE

25 17:00-18:00 LIFELONG LEARNING

JULY

01 17:00-18:00 WINE ASSOCIATION

15 17:00-18:00 ALUMNI INDUSTRY

27 17:00-18:00 LIFELONG LEARNING

AUGUST

24 17:00-18:00 LIFELONG LEARNING

SEPTEMBER

16 17:00-18:00 ALUMNI INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP
LECTURE

28 5pm-6pm LIFELONG LEARNING

OCTOBER

22-23 ALUMNI REUNION WEEKEND

NOVEMBER

18 17:00-18:00 ALUMNI INDUSTRY
LEADERSHIP LECTURE

ALUMNI REUNION WEEKEND

22-23 OCTOBER 2021

**EVENT DATES AND DETAILS MAY CHANGE DUE
TO UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES.**

PLEASE CHECK THE [UCT GSB's WEBSITE](#) TO CONFIRM.



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
