

UCT online high school announces Yandiswa Xhakaza as director and principal

In July this year, the University of Cape Town (UCT) launched an online high school, and in doing so became the first university on the African continent to extend its expertise and impact to the secondary schooling market through an innovative online modality.

Bolstering the launch announcement, the University of Cape Town has confirmed the placement of its UCT Online High School director and principal, Yandiswa Xhakaza, an avid educationalist.

Xhakaza brings a wealth of knowledge, having started and operated a school in Centurion in 2017. She is a prolific leader and comes from leading a national literacy organisation, the Nal'ibali Trust, where she served as CEO.

She holds a bachelor of education degree (Wits University), a postgraduate diploma in management (Wits University) and a master of business administration (University of Pretoria). Her operational skills and large-scale implementation capabilities are both going to be resourceful in her new role as UCT Online High School Director and Principal.

Xhakaza believes that UCT Online High School is exactly what this country needs, offering high-quality education at scale. She explains: "Online education in our context will always come with its own fair share of challenges as a developing country.

"The digital divide is significant and we have to work around the digital barriers such as poor network coverage, data costs, access to devices and computer literacy to mention a few. This is exactly the type of challenge I am excited about, because when we get this right, it will be a massive win for all of us."

Xhakaza begins her tenure as the director and principal of the UCT Online High School from November 2021 ahead of its first official cohort, cementing her role as its leader from an early onset.

"I am delighted to be joining the UCT Online High School team pioneering such amazing work and I look forward to breaking barriers and working towards the accomplishment of something so deeply personal to me, a course I have been preparing my whole life to chart forth."

UCT vice chancellor professor Mamokgethi Phakeng welcomed the appointment saying: "Yandiswa embodies what we as an institution stand for: building an inclusive society using the knowledge and resources that we possess. With her leading us on this journey we will be building a more equitable and sustainable social order and influencing our young people from an early age to prepare them for the demands of higher education and society."

Adding support in her career move, acting chairperson of the Nal'ibali Trust, Kay Lala-Sides, says: "We know that Yandiswa has a real passion for making high-quality education accessible to all South Africans. It is that passion that led her to Nal'ibali and it is the same passion that draws her to UCT's Online High School. We wish her well as she takes these experiences with her into her new role and look forward to opportunities to collaborate in the future."



Yandiswa Xhakaza

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